Dissertation in Music Performance
by

Arianna Dotto

A dissertation presented in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts
(Music Performance: Violin)
in the University of Michigan
2021

Dissertation Committee:

Professor David Halen, Chair
Associate Professor Danielle Belen
Assistant Professor Caroline Coade
Professor Colleen Conway
Associate Professor Kevin J. Maki

Arianna M. Dotto

dotto@umich.edu

ORCID iD: 0000-0003-1230-4776

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, who have helped me through every step of my education and inspired me to acknowledge the importance of musicological research in the field of performance.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my dear professor, David Halen, whose teachings helped me develop a unique voice and be one with that of my instrument. I am grateful for three years of encouragement and inspiration, during which I not only flourished as a performer, but also as a teacher, learning how to adapt to each individual student so that I may best guide them in their development as musicians and as people.

My sincere gratitude to Prof. Caroline Coade for the support I've received; she has been a great coach and friend throughout my years as a doctoral student.

I would also like to extend a particular word of thanks to Prof. Steven Whiting, whose musicology lectures inspired me to analyze the scores I perform with great curiosity and to continually seek to expand the breadth of my historical knowledge.

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ABSTRACT

The focus of the first program, for violin and viola duo, is the celebration of virtuoso works for this relatively lesser performed ensemble. The repertoire presented follows the development of the violin and viola duo from a traditionally amateur environment to that of the concert stage. Each of the four duos, from Mozart to Bohuslav Martinu, demonstrates how the collaboration of two such closely related instruments yields remarkably rich results no matter what the period or harmonic vocabulary. Every piece presented in this recital displays a unique style of virtuosity, each one reflecting the composers' different philosophical concepts of performance. Indeed, in every one of the duos, the listener witnesses new, groundbreaking approaches to virtuosity which will prove essential in the development of chamber music composition throughout the centuries.

The second recital draws exclusively from the work of three twentieth-century composers, Igor Stravinsky, Paul Hindemith, and Alfred Schnittke, each of whom leveled the post-Romantic playing field, as it were, and pressed forward with the development of entirely fresh, autonomous, and innovative musical languages in response to the mercurial aesthetic and philosophical climate of their day. The program revolves their different approaches to early 20th Century Neoclassicism, following Hindemith and Schnittke's references to Bach, and Stravinsky's arrangement of his Neoclassical ballet *Le Baiser de la Fée*.

The third recital was performed at the Chicago Cultural Center as part of the Dame Myra Hess Recitals, and was broadcast on WFMT. The performance was associated with a separate recorded lecture. Its program is constructed around the fascinating nexus both among and between the charismatic Robert Schumann, his equally famous (if not even more so) wife Clara Wieck Schumann, and the young Johannes Brahms in the period just prior to Robert's confinement and demise. Focusing on Clara's influence on the compositional style of the triumvirate, the program also follows the deep friendship that the three composers maintained with the famous virtuoso Joseph Joachim. All three works, for violin and piano, are representative of their mutual commitment to the concepts of *Werktreue* and transcendent, "poetic" virtuosity.

FIRST DISSERTATION RECITAL

ARIANNA DOTTO, VIOLIN

JOACHIM ANGSTER, VIOLA

Wednesday, October 2, 2019
Walgreen Drama Center, Stamps Auditorium
8:00 PM

Duo for Violin and Viola no. 1 in G Major, K. 423 (1783) — Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)
- Allegro
- Adagio
- Rondeau. Allegro

***Divertimento*, op. 27, no. 2** (1925) — Ernst Toch (1887-1964)
- Vivace Molto
- Adagio, Espressivo Molto
- Flott und Lustig

Intermission

Grand Duo for Violin and Viola, op. 13 (1808) — Louis Spohr (1784-1859)
- Allegro Moderato
- Adagio
- Tempo di Minuetto

***Three Madrigals* for Violin and Viola, H. 313** (1947) — Bohuslav Martinů (1890-1959)
- Poco Allegro
- Poco Andante
- Allegro

First Dissertation Recital: Program Notes
October 2, 2019

W. A. Mozart
Duo for Violin and Viola No.1, K.423

Composed just before the "Linz" Symphony, Mozart's duos K. 423 and K. 424 for violin and viola are two gems glistening with charm and elegance. It is widely presumed that they were written to help his friend Michael Haydn (Joseph's younger brother), who had been commissioned to write six duos but had fallen ill after completing the fourth one.
The commissioner for this set was Archbishop Colloredo of Salzburg, for whom Mozart had also worked before being dismissed from service in 1781 for insolence and arrogance. As recounted by Simon Keefe, Mozart felt underappreciated and bullied by his employer and preferred to take his talents elsewhere, wishing only to one day reciprocate the "kick on my behind."[1] It would have therefore been impossible for Mozart to sign these duos barely two years later, and he supposedly let Michael Haydn take the credit for them instead.

As interesting as this story sounds, there are some discrepancies which challenge its accuracy. First of all, Colloredo was a violinist and probably commissioned the pieces for himself, with no apparent need for a strict deadline (although one should not forget how pretentious and demanding he supposedly was, at least as Mozart would have us believe). Furthermore, no contemporary printing of the full set of six duos has been found to this day, which contributes to the suspicion that the story may have been invented or at least edulcorated for anecdotal appeal.[2]

[1] Simon P. Keefe, *Mozart in Vienna: The Final Decade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), p. 27.
[2] Allison Elaine Spieth, "A Matter of Taste: Duos for Violin and Viola by Joseph Haydn, Michael Haydn, and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart" (DMA diss., University of California Los Angeles, 2012), p. 16.

In any case, Mozart had been the first to break the traditional boundaries that relegated the viola to the role of accompanist with his *Sinfonia Concertante* written just three years earlier, and he had already completed four of his six quartets dedicated to Joseph Haydn. It is quite possible that Mozart was simply using these duos to hone his contrapuntal skills. Only the year before, in fact, he had been granted access to Baron Gottfried van Swieten's collection of little-known scores by J.S. Bach and G.F. Haendel. In a letter to his sister, Mozart wrote that when he played the fugues of Bach and Handel for his wife Constanze, she liked them so much that she would insist on listening to nothing else, and she urged him to write one himself.[3] Among his many baroque-inspired contrapuntal compositions are the Fantasia and Fugue K. 394 for piano, and six lovely preludes and fugues K. 404a for string trio; but his newly discovered passion for the art of contrapunctus is particularly evident in his string quartets dedicated to J. Haydn, the most striking example being found in the final fugue movement of K. 387— which bears many similarities with the Duo for violin and viola K. 423.

Doubtless recent developments in the rise of the string quartet were wonderfully fresh and fertile ground for Mozart to further develop his skill as a master composer of chamber music for strings. Although Joseph Haydn had already produced many works for the genre, his monumental set of six quartets Op. 33, written for the Viennese publisher Artaria in the fall of 1781, are generally considered to have modernized the relationship among the four instruments to an unprecedented level of equality. Haydn famously described them as having been written "in an entirely new and special way" in personal letters addressed to potential subscribers of Artaria's publications.[4] In a world where artists and intellectuals discussed and lived by the

[3] Letter dated 20 April 1782, in *The Letters of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1769-1791)*, trans. Lady Wallace, vol II (New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1866), pp. 123-124.
[4] Stephanie Klaurk and Reiner Kleinerts, "Mozart's Italianate Response to Haydn's Opus 33," *Music & Letters* 97/ 4 (November 2016).

ideals and models promoted by the Enlightenment, the string quartet was enthusiastically embraced as the metaphorical pursuit of "musical conversation." As observed by Edward Klorman:

> "Many people, including Haydn, owned popular books that offered tips and instruction on how to cultivate conversational skills. In her essay 'The Spirit of Conversation' (1813) the celebrated Enlightenment hostess Madame de Staël compares conversation to music, and writes of the former: *It is a certain manner of acting upon one another, of giving mutual and instantaneous delight, of speaking the moment one thinks, of acquiring immediate self-enjoyment, of receiving applause without labour, of displaying the understanding in all its shades by accent, gesture, look; of eliciting; in short, at will the electric sparks, which relieve some of the excess of their vivacity, and serve to awaken others out of a state of painful apathy.*"[5]

Although there is no documentation establishing a direct link between Haydn's Op. 33 and Mozart's return to the genre, it is easily confirmed by comparison of their respective scores, as observed by Klauk and Kleinertz:

"Beginning in 1782—the very year of the first print of Op. 33—with the G major quartet K. 387, during the following years Mozart composed a series of six string quartets, which he published in 1785 with an often-cited dedication to Haydn. No document exists that would confirm Haydn's role in the conception of this series. If, however, chronology *and* dedication were not pure coincidence, it must be assumed that something in Op. 33 had provoked Mozart.

[5] Edward Klorman, "String quartets were Likened to Refined Conversation During the 18th and 19th Centuries," *The Strad*, 31 July 2016.

Indeed, it is almost a commonplace of music historiography that Mozart's 'Haydn' quartets were stimulated and influenced by Haydn's Op. 33."[6]

In my opinion, Haydn's Op. 33 quartets also left their substantial imprint on Mozart's duos for violin and viola. In the duo K. 423, this can partially be explained by linking its similarities to the string quartet in G Major K. 387, but there are other elements that, in my opinion, were directly extrapolated from Haydn's quartets.

The first movement opens with a sonorous "hello" chord, followed by a lively descending scale to a series of repeated Cs distinguished by alternating grace notes. Aptly described by Spieth as "chirping grace notes,"[7] these "chirps" then become the structural basis for the next bar, which itself lands on a light "chirpy" turn.

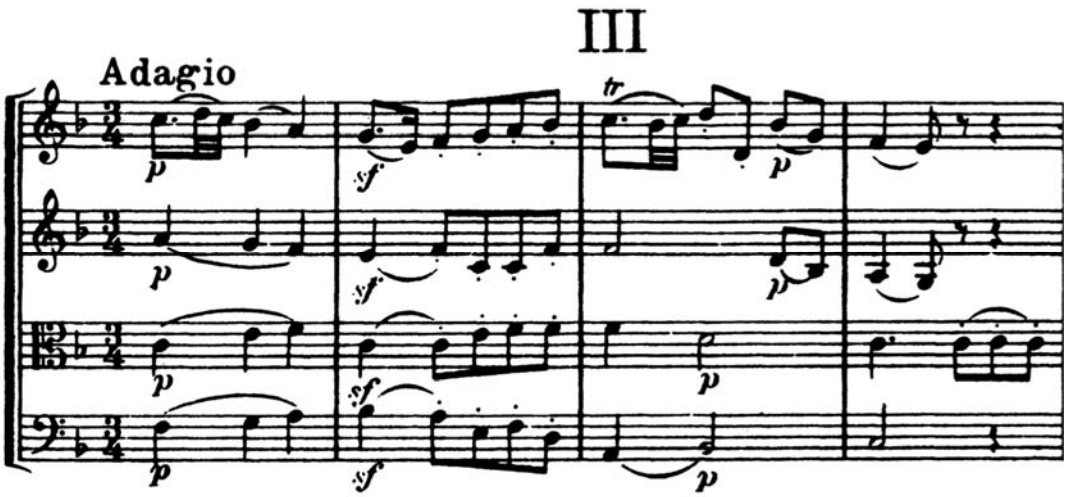
Concerning the peculiar notation of these grace-notes, Clive Brown writes: "Some late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century composers occasionally used single small notes that did not fit into the conventional categories of grace-notes, anticipatory notes, or appoggiaturas. (…) These 'pseudo-grace-notes' may involve performance either on or before the beat. (...) Mozart's Duo for violin and viola K. 423, for instance, [contains] examples of small notes standing for normal notes on the beat."[8] The effect of these grace notes played on the beat is quite similar to that of the first movement of Haydn's "Bird" quartet, Op. 33/3. Indeed, the turns and embellishments in the violin part all the way through to the secondary theme are reminiscent of Haydn's quartet (as is the viola accompaniment in measures 13-15, strikingly similar to the second violin accompaniment of the secondary theme in the quartet's first movement).

[6] Klauck and Kleinerts, "Mozart's Italianate Response."
[7] Spieth, "A Matter of Taste," p. 24.
[8] Clive Brown, *Classical & Romantic Performing Practice 1750-1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 486.

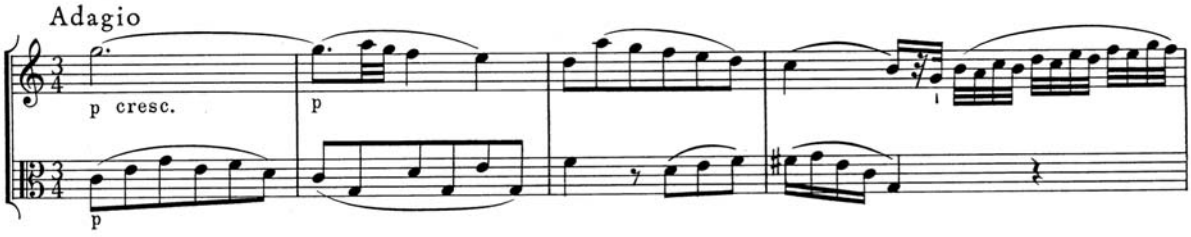
Despite its initial role, by the end of the exposition the viola has become far more than a mere foil for the violin, assuming equal prominence as a full-throated motivic contributor intent on imitative pursuit. The development begins with a quiet and contemplative pause, after which the chase resumes in a rapid exchange of scales and arpeggiated turns that gradually settle into a series of measured sixteenth-note trills and turns, again suggestive of birds in song. The recapitulation leads to a final canonic burst of flight which ends, this time, on the subdominant (a C major chord), followed by a short suspenseful pause and sudden change of dynamic. This frequent, playful use of dynamic contrast, which is also reminiscent of Haydn's Op. 33 quartets, had already been a fundamental characteristic of Mozart's quartet K. 387. The coda of the movement tightens the proximity of these dynamic shifts before ending on a final triumphant perfect authentic cadence.

There is no small resemblance between the beginning of the K. 423 *Adagio* and that of Haydn's Op. 33/3:

Example 1: J. Haydn, String Quartet Op. 33/ 3, *Adagio* mm. 1-4:

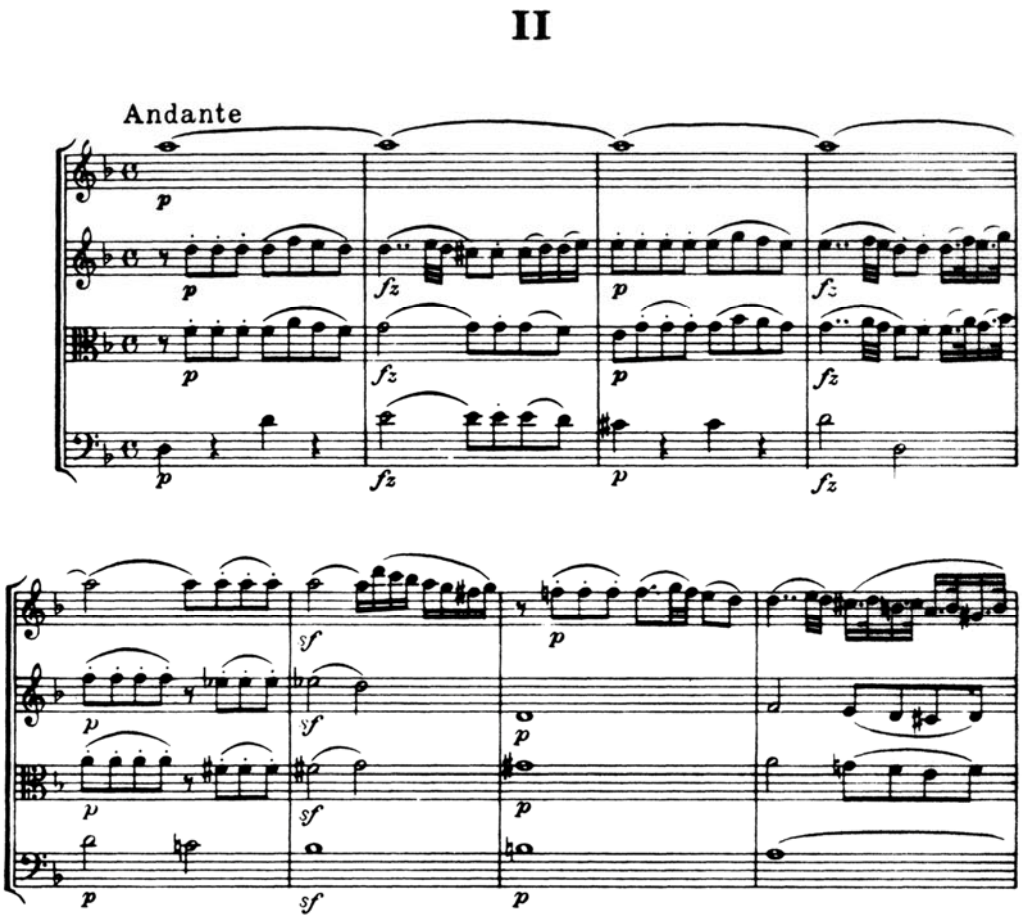


Example 2: Mozart, Duo K. 423, *Adagio* mm. 1-4:



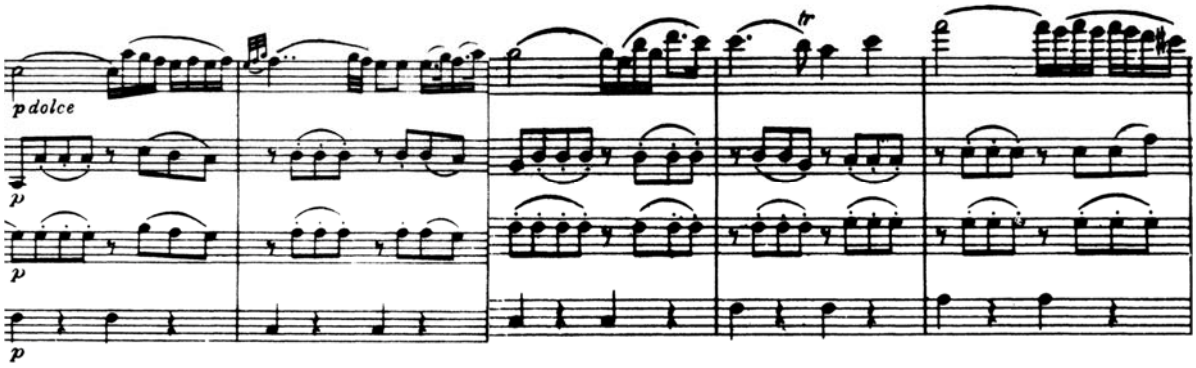
Its long opening note extended over the harmonic movement of the lower voice also brings to mind the *Andante* of Haydn's Op. 33/6:

Example 3: J. Haydn, Op. 33/6, *Andante* mm. 1-8:

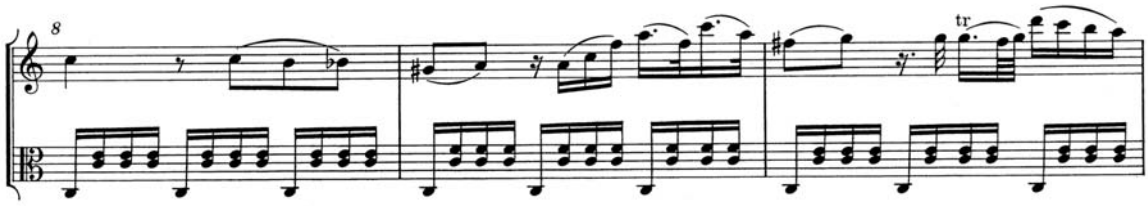


In addition, what Spieth describes as an “oompah” accompaniment following the end of the principal theme is actually a direct citation of the accompaniment a little later in the *Andante of* Haydn’s Op. 33/6:

Example 4: J. Haydn, Op. 33/6, *Andante* mm. 11-15:



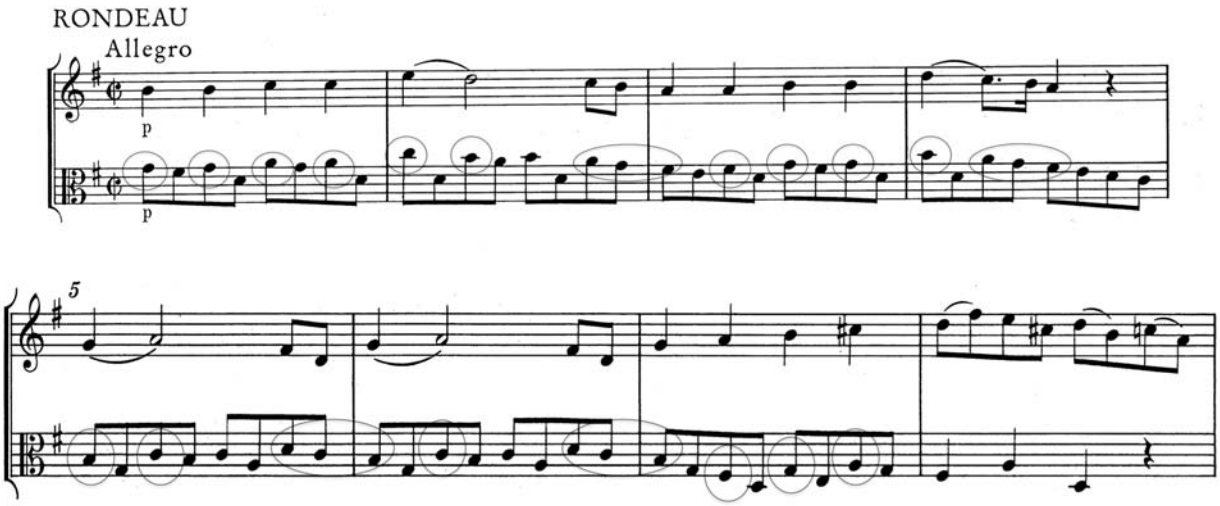
Example 5: Mozart, Duo K. 423, *Adagio* mm. 8-10:



Here the highly expressive melodic twists and turns punctuated by the frequent juxtaposition of *appoggiature* and *ritardi* remind us of similar signatures in the first and last movements of Mozart's K. 387 quartet, but they are also a nod to both slow movements of Haydn's Op. 33/3 and 6. When the viola steps into the spotlight, the equal footing it establishes with the violin becomes the basis of a perfectly balanced pas de deux, an intimate choreography of elaborate, continuously overlapping gestures periodically sustained by the motivic return of the same extended G with which the movement began. Its final four measures, plaintive as the call of a mourning dove, bring the two instruments to one last quiet embrace.

The theme of the *Rondeau*, marked *Allegro*, features crisply detached quarter notes harmonically reinforced by the viola's rocking eighth-note accompaniment beneath (quite similar to many of the second violin's accompaniments found throughout Haydn's "Bird" quartet, which serve to sustain the first violin's "ornithological" interludes). Note how the viola actually "echos" the violin a third below

Example 6:



Crescendo and *diminuendo* indications are notably absent in this movement. Here, for example, when the two instruments trade places for the next seven measures, the dynamic suddenly changes from *piano* to *forte*. Although in some cases the sheer direction of the melody invites the performers to naturally diminish or increase the sound before reaching the next section, it should be remembered that Mozart had been experimenting with the rapid succession of abrupt dynamic shifts in his quartet K. 387, most famously (and rather humorously) in the Menuetto. In this movement, however, the intended effect seems to be more of a question and response, often of a dramatic import.

As per tradition, this final movement in A-B-A-C-A-B-A sonata-rondo form is the most brilliant of the three, a colorful keidoscope of changing shapes and patterns. Its beautiful, central deviation to the parallel minor mode in the C section is further divided into three parts, two of them canonic in character, flanking an episode for the violin full of lyrical chromaticism and sighing arpeggiation.

The end of the movement thrusts both instruments upwards to the highest notes of the entire work before presenting the A theme one last time, transposed an octave higher and *piano*, then launching the violin into an impressive *forte* triplet descent which transfers seamlessly to the viola in the coda. Then, in the last four measures Mozart defies expectations with a playful *piano-forte* cadence, as if to confirm the clean corners of surprise suggested by the many dynamic changes throughout this movement.

Ernst Toch
Divertimento for Violin and Viola, Op. 37 No. 2

The son of a Jewish leather merchant, Ernst Toch (1887-1964) was drawn to music early in his youth, when his family briefly accepted an amateur violinist as a tenant in their household in Vienna. The boy would spend his time watching their guest practice and, assisted by the natural gift of perfect pitch, he quickly learned to decipher musical notation and the basics of harmony on his own. Soon he managed to procure miniature scores of Mozart's string quartets and set about "dissecting" them in his free time. Because his father, who did not understand or share his passion for music, preferred that the child pursue more practical interests, for most of his youth Toch was obliged to hide these musical endeavors from his family and thus learned to compose as an autodidact: "I am [trained] by Mozart, by Bach... How would anybody know? Nobody played an instrument with [me], nobody sang with [me], and I did all this in secrecy. These were my only masters. I never had any other."[9]

It stands to reason, then, that Toch would begin by composing almost exclusively string quartets of his own, completing six by the age of seventeen. With the help of a friend, the last of these came to the attention of Arnold Rosé, who decided to give its premiere with the famous Rosé Quartet in 1905. Four years later, having nearly completed his (perhaps dutiful) preparation for a career in medicine at the University of Vienna, he unexpectedly won and happily accepted a prestigious international quadrennial Mozart Prize for composers, which included a scholarship to study at the Conservatory in Frankfurt. Although he was left somewhat disillusioned by the formal training of the Conservatory, his degree enabled him to obtain a teaching position at the Mannheim Hochschüle für Musik. It was during this period, amidst frequent visits home, that he

[9] Dorothy L. Crawford, *A Windfall of Musicians: Hitler's Émigrés and Exiles in Southern California* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009), pp. 135-136.

met and fell in love with Lilly Zwack, the daughter of a banker and member of the Viennese Jewish aristocracy. A trained violinist with a broad cultural education who spoke French and English, Lilly would prove to be not only a solid, articulate bastion of support but even essential to his very survival. With the Great War approaching, Toch was drafted into the Austrian army and sent to the Italian and Russian fronts, left to struggle through the first years of the war until Lilly was able to secure a cultural deferment (thanks to her family's political influence) that rescued him from the trenches barely a week before a gas attack wiped out his entire squadron.[10]

This experience in the war took its toll on Toch's understandably exiguous creative production, and it heavily influenced his subsequent compositional style. His ninth string quartet (1919) is testimony of the stylistic changes he experienced: Expressionist atonality would be the best description for his new language, which had little public appeal at the time and for which he was labeled an avant-garde composer.

Meanwhile, the "roaring twenties" in Germany had to reckon with the devastation left by the war and a consequent climate of profound political upheaval. Punished by the Treaty of Versailles, the country suffered a terrible economic crisis, provoking a growing sense of resentment against the Republic of Weimar. 1920 marked the appearance of a translation of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*— a malevolent Russian hoax suggesting that World War I had been the result of a conspiracy by Jewish people seeking to overtake the world. With hyperinflation reaching its highest peak in 1923, the National Socialist German Worker's Party (in short, the Nazis) saw an opportunity to seize power by attempting a coup with the Beer Hall Putsch. In 1925, Adolf Hitler published *Mein Kampf*.

[10] As recounted by Lawrence Weschler in "My Grandfather's Last Tale," *The Atlantic* 278/6 (December 1996).

Yet despite these difficult times, German culture was experiencing the "Weimar Renaissance," in which Modernist trends permeated the arts and encouraged a complete detachment, indeed the rejection of tradition. In 1919, Walter Gropius became the founder of the Bauhaus School of Design in Weimar. The world of painting witnessed the rise and success of the Expressionist movement, with artists shifting their focus from the portrayal of reality to the illustration of the emotions it provoked. Films like Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927) displayed troubling images through the use of distorted sets and camera angles. And in music, the revolution led by composers such as Arnold Schoenberg, Anton Webern, and Alban Berg sought to break the boundaries of tonality in search of a new means of expression.

Regarding his new approach to harmony, Toch explained that "the old idiom of tonality had exhausted itself and was incapable of utterance without repeating itself, that the once live and effective tensions of its harmonic scope were worn out and had lost their effect. (...) Indeed, [breaking free of that tonality] was refreshing, even an inner need, (...) as refreshing as a plunge into cold water on a tropical summer day."[11]

In 1924, Toch wrote an eleventh string quartet, his last for the next twenty-two years. Meanwhile he began experimenting with Paul Hindemith in electronic and mechanical music, culminating by the end of the decade in what he called *Grammophonmusik*, a completely new concept of musical creation and performance that incorporated the use of sound recording in the compositional process. Mark Katz explains that "Novel sounds and textures were created by altering the speed and direction of discs during playback; passages performed at different times were juxtaposed and superimposed. And though it was never realized, several writers proposed the idea of disc inscription: apre-electronic form of musical synthesis in which composers would

[11] Ibid.

inscribe discs directly, imitating traditional sounds or inventing new ones without the aid of a performer. Though largely forgotten now, the brief life of *Grammophonmusik* deserves renewed attention, for it illuminates a chapter of twentieth-century music in which composers explored new timbrai [sic], rhythmic, and contrapuntal possibilities for their works, sought independence from performers, and began a complex, profound, and continuing relationship with the technologies that preserve and disseminate musical sound."[12] Indeed, *Grammophonmusik* was a precursor to the trend of electronic music that would only develop in Germany much later, in the 1950s.

In 1926, Toch, Hindemith, and Gerhart Münch organized a completely unconventional concert in the small town of Donaueschigen, in the Black Forest. Its featured performer was a Welte-Mignon automatic piano. Welte's company, founded in a nearby town, had been producing automatic instruments since 1832, and had introduced their player pianos around 1905. For the occasion, Toch wrote three studies and transcribed *Der Jongleur* (the third of his 1923 *Burlesken* for piano Op. 31), which explored the virtuosic possibilities in speed, polyphony, and texture that a human performer could not provide. Mechanical music possessed a unique attribute for Toch, which he described as *Nicht-Wärme* (non-warmth).13

That same year, Toch composed two *Divertimenti* Op. 37, dedicated to the Kolisch String Quartet (also known as the *Neue Wiener Streichquartett)*, an ensemble founded in Vienna in the early 1920s for the performance and dissemination of Schoenberg's works, and of classical works that exemplified Schoenberg's teaching principles. The first *Divertimento* was written for violin and cello, and the second one for violin and viola, thereby involving all four players in

[12] Mark Katz, (2001) "Hindemith, Toch, and *Grammophonmusik*," *Journal of Musicological Research* 20/2 (2001): 161-180. See also Carmel Raz, "The Lost Movements of Ernst Toch's *Gesprochene Musik*," *Current Musicology* 97 (Spring 2014).
13 Thomas Patteson, " 'The Joy of Precision': Mechanical Instruments and the Aesthetics of Automation," in *Instruments for New Music: Sound, Technology, and Modernism* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016), p. 40.

separate pairs. The second *Divertimento* is perhaps the more avant-garde of the two, and in some ways it reflects the influences of Toch's experimentation with mechanical music production.

With the first notes of the *Vivace molto*, the listener is immediately spellbound by a commanding sequence of double-stopped triplets on a *forte* dynamic, with a brief eighth-note rest separating each homorhythmic entrance of the two voices. One triplet (with the next downbeat attached), then two triplets, three, continuing as if without end when the violin erupts into a chromatic descent followed canonically by the viola to a new sequence of single and multiple-triplet entrances. All of this, with no time signature by way of assistance, requires a level of precision between the players that, at the speed indicated, is almost inhuman. Conrad Bruderer describes the harmonic structure of the movement as "bi-tonal."14 I understand this interpretation, as the instruments often start their triplets with an overlap of two separate fifths, each of which could be interpreted as an incomplete chord. These simultaneous fifths, however, are always interlocked at intervals of a major third, producing major seventh chords. Throughout the movement, we witness Toch's constant use of major seventh chords, becoming a major ninth chord at the coda. In my opinion, this is proof that the composer wasn't suggesting bi-tonality but was rather playing with the architecture of the major seventh chord. Furthermore, each of the triplet sequences features only one moving line, usually the top one. Rising and descending in chromatic fashion, such lines do not pertain to any tonality but are conceived to create a feeling of fluidity in this constant, almost mechanical repetition of triplets. Despite this incessant iteration of triplets, never does the music become stiff or lifeless. In the composer's words, "There is a peculiar thing about repetition in music. Music by and large is almost inconceivable without repetition. It is the rhythmical recurrence of a motivic pattern that provides the unifying

14 Conrad David Bruderer, "A Study of Twentieth-Century Violin and Viola Duos" (PhD diss., University of California, San Diego, 1998).

undercurrent of sections, at least, if not of whole movements. (…) And yet we are apt to take for mere repetition what the master, in pursuit of continuous flow, may present in constantly changing appearance, giving us just enough of the repetition to enjoy the acquaintance, and at the same time just enough of variation to enjoy subconsciously the constant renewal."15

In the middle of the movement the viola introduces a new motivic cell consisting of two ascending thirty-second notes leading to a half note extended over the bar line. By shortening the longer note, Toch creates a new thematic element from this cell, compressed and expanded as it moves between the instruments by swoops and turns through the ever-present triplets. As the movement nears its conclusion the violin turns rhapsodic through waves of sixteenth notes that surge with ever greater intensity, further reinforced by the viola who joins in at the lower octave in a tempestuous, *stringendo* acceleration. The result much resembles the effect produced in Toch's player-piano version of the Burleske *Der Jongleur*.16 Just before the coda, the waves become compressed into tight pounding undulations against the return of the triplets, and then suddenly stop — only to surrender to a thunderous reprise of the homorhythmic triplets, *quasi presto* and *fortissimo al fine*.

This movement seems to be the embodiment of Toch's ideals:

> "No motif is too small, too insignificant, too negligible to promote, not only construction and movement, but inspiration itself. (…) It lives on repetition and yet on constant metamorphosis; metamorphic, polymorphic, opalescent in itself, it takes on the hue, the flavor, the very mood of the environment in which it is embedded. (…) But above all, it creates and feeds movement, movement, movement, *the very essence of life*, and fends off the arch-enemy stagnation, the very essence of death.

15 Ernst Toch, *The Shaping Forces in Music* (New York: Criterion Music Corp., 1948), p. 197.
16 A video performance of this piece is available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ectxDYjZWg

It, the little motif, becomes the motive, the motive power, the MOTOR."[17]

With the *Adagio* we encounter a complete change of character. A *piano espressivo* slow theme in the violin gradually expands and unfurls around long sustained notes in a series of cadenzas while the viola comments with syncopated staccato triplets, recalling the motivic cell of the first movement and suggesting the character of a *siciliana*. There is no clear tonality to this opening section. The chromatic nature of the violin part is set over a sequence of fourths, sevenths, and fifths in the viola: these intervals are all related to each other, as the fifth is nothing but the inversion of a fourth, and a seventh can be subdivided into two fourths. Once again the composer is neither conforming to traditional tonal schemes, nor adhering to a twelve-tone system; he is simply experimenting with intervals. It is helpful to consider Toch's observations on harmony in his treatise: "(…) harmony itself, of three pitches or whatever number, of half-tone or whatever extended system, is but the casual, incidental image of arrested motion, of ever-fluctuating situation, ever-changing meaning and effect." He later continued: "The psychological mark of the non-harmonic melody is veiledness, refinement, suspense, restraint, feminine tenderness, softness, the erotic touch ranging from tender yearning to flaring passion."[18]

Moving through one last cadenza, *crescendo* and *accelerando*, the violin exchanges places with the viola to mark the beginning of the next section. Here the viola's variation on the main theme soon erupts into a dramatic series of long expressive fifths, reaching the movement's *fortissimo* climax and then joining the violin in an extended, homorhythmic chromatic descent of dotted triplets to the lowest registers of both instruments, enriched along the way with thirds and sixths to produce chords of dominant ninths and French augmented sixths, before coming to rest on a mysterious triple *piano*.

[17] Toch, *Shaping Forces*, pp. 200-201.
[18] Ibid., pp. 58 and 106.

The bridge passage that follows is the most expressive moment of the entire movement, five lyrical measures abundantly supplied with indications, from *piano espressivo* to *dolcissimo pianissimo* to *unendlich zart* ("infinitely tender"), that envelop the two performers in a soothing and sensitive embrace as hypnotic as the relentless, simil-mechanical propulsion of the movement that had come before, no less a contrast than the extremes of pleasure and pain. With the final, quadruple *piano* chord of the brief reprise, Toch foreshadows the harmonic interplay of the last movement's juxtaposition of two triads at the distance of a semitone.

The overall tripartite formulation of this *Divertimento* is perhaps a deliberate echo of Mozart's duos K. 423 and K. 424 (fast movement—slow movement—rondo), with this slow movement also in a tripartite, A-B-A' structure. For Toch, the "principal of tripartition" was essential: "To it [tripartition] most of the forms can be traced, regardless of their substructures, proportions, standards, terms. It is of little concern whether we call the three parts exposition, development and reprise, or the sections of the three-part song form, or Menuetto, Trio, and da Capo, or just A B A'. The affinity and correlation of the flanking parts will always be felt as against the middle part, the bearer of intensification, plot, *contrast*. (…) The principle of tripartition, as manifest in art, is rooted in nature, in our souls, in our very existence."[19]

The last movement, a dance structured as a 7-part rondo with an additional initial A section (A-A-B-A-C-A-B-A), also features many elements of Classical tradition filtered through the composer's personal lens. Despite the light-hearted tempo indication, *Flott und Lustig* ("brisk and fun"), it sounds quite rustic with its *fortissimo* dynamic and offbeat *sforzandos*. The initial viola accompaniment for the A section alternates between low, emphatic fifths and trilled thirds, which create a droll dissonance with the violin part. The A section never comes back intact— at

[19] Ibid., pp. 163-164.

each return, it is modified, or even truncated. In the B sections, the composer introduces the theme first in triple meter, then duple, reflecting a shifting rhythmic inflection that permeates the entire movement. It is assigned to both instruments by turns, whereas the main theme of the A sections is always reserved for the violin. The C section is instead little more than a brief episode based on elements of the A section.

No theme, or even motif, seems to fit any one tonality. For this reason, I do not see bi-tonality in this movement, but rather the juxtaposition of chromatically displaced intervals and triads. The only allusion to a traditional tonality occurs at the end of the first A section, where the two instruments seem to agree on a C major chord, alluding to a PAC in C major. The effect, however, is quite comical, as its abrupt announcement takes the listener by surprise. Then too, it reminds us yet again that Toch's harmonic vocabulary was his and his alone, and that "he could not swim with the stream":[20] "Although I pass for a modernist and even atonalist, my music is in no way atonal, nor has it anything to do with the twelve-tone system. Rather, it is rooted in tonality, which is, however, treated in a hovering, gyrating manner, gravitating always towards definite tone centers."[21]

With political tensions rising in Germany, Toch fled the country and eventually the continent some few years later, like many other composers of his time who made their way to the United States. He too, like Martinů, was "discovered" by Sergei Koussevitsky, who premiered his second piano concerto with the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1928 and again (with Toch, an able pianist, at the keyboard) in 1932. But he was obliged to pass the first decade of his American sojourn (1935-45) writing film music, much of it uncredited, in Hollywood; even so, of his seventeen scores for Paramount, three were nominated for an Academy Award. He began

[20] As observed by Hugo Strelitzer, a close colleague of Toch; quoted in Crawford, *A Windfall of Musicians*, p. 161.
[21] Toch, letter to Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, 11 September 1938; quoted in Ibid., p. 146.

to compose symphonic music only in the 1950s, meanwhile teaching extensively and publishing *The Shaping Forces in Music*: *An Inquiry into Harmony, Melody, Counterpoint, and Form* "born of his frustration as a teacher at the lack of texts capable of integrating modern and classical styles."[22] In 1956 he won the Pulitzer Prize for his Third Symphony, but his doggedly independent sincerity all but ensured that he would become, as he ruefully remarked toward the latter years of his life, "the forgotten composer of the century."[23]

[22] Weschler, "My Grandfather's Last Tale.."
[23] As recounted by Nicolas Slonimsky from a conversation with Toch in 1955; quoted in Crawford, *A Windfall of Musicians*, p. 134.

Louis Spohr
Grand Duo For Violin And Viola In E Minor, Op. 13

Born in Braunschweig, Germany, Louis Spohr (1784-1859) was a child of the Enlightenment, steeped in the formative influences of art and especially music. The eldest son of passionate amateur musicians, he rapidly absorbed sufficient knowledge of the violin in his youth to be able to participate in musical soirees with his parents. Following more systematic study with the concertmaster of the Braunschweig Court Chapel, he joined that same ensemble himself at the age of 15 and began to acquire extensive experience in chamber music performance, introducing numerous musical circles to Beethoven's Op. 18 string quartets. In 1803 Spohr chanced to attend a concert of the contemporary virtuoso violinist Pierre Rode, whose technique he thereupon determined to learn and imitate, with particular focus on the French school's cantabile playing style. Indeed, it was the singing quality of Spohr's long, expressive bowings that would make his tone so distinctive and earn him the incredible fame he came to enjoy. As his own pupil Hans Michel Schletterer recounted, "His first bow-stroke had gripped every member of the audience. (…) Spohr's nonchalant ease, his elegance and his complete control defy description. (…) There was no bow-stroke that he could not execute with mastery (…) But even more remarkable than his bowing technique was his tone, which cascaded from his violin like a great waterfall."[24]

In 1804 Spohr was appointed concertmaster of the Court Chapel in Gotha, a vibrant urban environment with a stimulating community of artists and intellectuals. Many among them were members of the local masonic lodge, which he joined in 1807. Spohr wholeheartedly embraced masonic values, which aimed to "build" a better society by promoting the progressive ideals of the Enlightenment, and he was very committed to imparting them to his own students.

[24] Hans Michael Schletterer, in *Sammlung musikalischer Vorträge* No. 29 (1881); trans. Celia Skrine.

He believed in the importance of collaboration and included his students in chamber music soirees and invited them to play in the Court Chapel; but the most particular aspect of his teaching consisted of the regular excursions to factories and mines that he would organize for his violin students, in order to provide them with a "comprehensive social education."[25] He embraced this philosophy in his performance style as well: despite being recognized as the most eminent violin virtuoso of his time, Spohr always privileged expressiveness over virtuosity. Whereas performers were traditionally expected to "decorate" the music as best they saw fit, and even Spohr himself had advocated for a tasteful but free use of rubato in his earlier years, embellishments in his compositions were conceived to exalt the musical meaning of a passage, rather than simply to unleash fanciful flourishes of technical prowess for their own sake. In so doing, Spohr advocated a novel, revolutionary approach to performance by shifting the focus from the performer to the music itself. In his own words, it was important that the performer should provide a "faithful rendition of everything indicated by means of notes, symbols, and technical terms (…) following closely the indicated nuances of loud and soft of the strokes, slurs, turns, trills, etc."[26] Indeed, with the later advent of the metronome, he was one of the first composers to provide precise tempo markings in his parts. This idea of placing oneself in service of the score was very much in keeping with the principles. In the musical world of the time it was a new perspective through which to experience music, for performers and audiences alike.

Of course, Spohr was not the only musician to think this way. One need only consider the relatively recent development and diffusion of the string quartet— a formation thought to be a musical portrayal of democracy, where each voice was attributed equal importance and

[25] Martin Wolfhorst, "Louis Spohr: Life and Works" (2006): https://louis-spohr.com.
[26] Louis Spohr, *Violinschule* (Vienna [1833]; reprint, Munich 2000; English translation, London 1843), p. 195.

performers were expected to avoid any temptation to exploit their parts in a self-demonstrative fashion. A note about string quartet performance in an 1810 issue of the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* (AMZ) reads: "(…) the quartet player must appropriately penetrate into the character of the composition and come to an agreement about it with his partners. After they have reached unanimity about his character, everyone must only strive to fit into the whole, while renouncing his individuality."[27] Spohr proved himself to be an innovator by transposing the spirit of these same principles into the world of solo playing. Along with his wonderful tone, he was praised for his unique ability to capture the essence of each composition in his repertoire, having explored and developed a particular style for every composer whose music he performed. As posited in his *Violonschule* (1833): "(…) if the performer adds to the performance and is able to imbue the piece he plays with spiritual life so that the listener can recognize and feel the composer's intentions, this is called a *beautiful performance*, which thus unites correctness, feelings and elegance (…) what transforms the correct into the beautiful performance (is) the ability to recognize the character of the piece of music to be performed and to sense and render its prevailing expression."[28]

Relatively unknown to today's audiences, Louis Spohr's Grand Duo Op. 13 for violin and viola admirably encapsulates the composer's aesthetic and performance ideals. Published in Leipzig in 1808, it is the only piece Spohr wrote for this formation (his other duos were composed for two violins). Here too the composer proved himself a pioneer: while the duos of contemporary virtuosos like Viotti or Rode were largely intended as didactic material for moderately capable players, "Spohr wrote his chamber music for various occasions and artists,

[27] Quoted in Martin Wulfhorst, "Louis Spohr and the Modern Concept of Performance," rev. trans. of "Louis Spohr und die moderne Konzeption der werkorientierten Interpretation," *JJas Orchester* 46/7-8 (July-August 1998), pp- 2-9.
[28] Spohr, *Violonschule*, p. 246; quoted in Wulfhorst, "Louis Spohr and the Modern Concept of Performance."

but he always had in mind highly skilled amateur performers or professionals like himself. Spohr made a point of insisting on the profession of music as worthy of the highest regard, and he strove always to write up to this profession rather than down to an amateurish crowd."[29] The piece is in fact quite challenging, though never in an ostentatious fashion: its difficulty lies principally in managing the intricate contours of long melodic phrases, often "embroidered" with expressive embellishments which must align perfectly between the two voices. Spohr's use of the viola versus the more common two-violin formation also allowed him to exploit a significantly broader palette of texture and harmonic possibilities, including simultaneous double stops that are reminiscent of a string quartet's rich sonorities.

The first movement (*Allegro moderato*) in E minor is structured on a *sonata quasi fantasia* template. Despite their introductory character, the first eleven measures serve as a pseudo-principal theme, but this only becomes clear when we hear the "recapitulation" close to the end of the movement. Measures 1-4 feature a shared homorhythmic entrance of a somewhat "heroic" character, composed of ascending arpeggios and consequent descending scales, which end on a trilled "curtsey" before passing to the next section. A short *simil-recitativo* follows, where the violin, imitating the declamatory melodic discourse one might hear from an opera soprano, "sings" over the viola's challenging accompaniment of double-stopped trills based on the aforementioned "curtsey."

At measure 12, the viola leads a transition based on the melody of the initial four measures and prepares the modulation to G major for the entrance of the secondary theme. Throughout the movement, the second violin will lead the secondary theme, and the viola will lead the sections based on the principal theme. These two themes appear in alternating fashion,

[29] John Herschel Baron, *Intimate Music: A History of the Idea of Chamber Music* (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1998), p. 308.

with each voice responsible for an equal share of the dialogue. The sonata form is traced in broad, flexible strokes to favor a stream-of-thought approach that tends toward the *fantasia* and thereby facilitates this "democratic" exchange.

As previously stated, the "recapitulation" occurs very late in the movement, with the reprise of the initial 11 measures in a modulatory path toward the tonality of B major. Spohr chose to create a 15-measure Picardy ending by restating the secondary theme in E major to close the movement.

From a performer's perspective, this movement is perhaps the one that most distinctly reflects the aesthetic pillars of Spohr's compositional technique. Long bow strokes are a predominant characteristic, often embracing a considerable number of notes which the violin and viola are expected to share in simultaneous, single "breaths." As noted by Mark Radice, "Contemporary writings by and about Spohr tell us a good deal concerning his bowing (…) he liked to play as many notes as possible under one bow stroke."[30] It was perhaps no casual coincidence that at the very beginning of his career Spohr had acquired a bow by François Tourte (1747-1835), who thoroughly heated his sticks of pernambuco before bending them to greatly increase their flexibility, unlike his predecessors who simply carved each stick to its desired shape across the fibres of the wood.[31] Tourte's innovative approach was of critical advantage to the player, not only in the execution of various shorter bow strokes but also in the expressive distribution of exceptionally long ones, something more easily achievable with a suitably responsive bow. What is more, at the end of almost each section Spohr, who "disapproved of the French practice at that time of accenting the last note of a phrase,"[32] deliberately added a

[30] Mark A. Radice, *Chamber Music: An Essential History* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2012), p. 107.
[31] Robin Stowell, *Violin Technique and Performance Practice in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 18-19.
[32] Radice, *Chamber Music*, p. 107.

diminuendo indication as if to prevent such risk. *Piano* and *pianissimo* dynamics prevail throughout, sustaining the movement's *cantabile* character, while *forte* dynamics are reserved for the partial homorhythmic, "heroic" citations of the initial measures.

The *Adagio*, set in C major, begins with a theme introduced by both instruments together, much like the first movement. Despite its apparent simplicity, this *da capo aria* is perhaps the most difficult of the three movements. The tonality of C major, with its two distant bookends — from the bottom open C of the viola to the top open E of the violin — is particularly challenging to manage in non-tempered tuning, further complicated by the pervasive presence of simultaneous double stops. There are two main themes throughout the movement—one shared between the voices and one presented by the "soprano" voice — and a third thematic element that serves the purpose of modulation and is exclusively reserved for the "alto" voice. In the "soprano theme," consisting of belcanto-style triplet figuration, there is a succession of upward leaps which Spohr expected the violinist to produce on one string. One might be tempted to interpret this as a superficial pyrotechnical gesture, but it is clear that Spohr was trying to imitate the voice, with "gliding from one note to another" (*portamento*) and "changing the finger on the same note" as "necessary technical expedients" to achieve a "fine interpretation."[33]
Here again the composer privileged *piano* and *pianissimo* dynamics, with the exception of the shared initial theme marked *mezzoforte*. On two occasions Spohr used joined hairpins to highlight the beautiful deceptive cadence that introduces the closing material preceding both the return of the A section, and the final *coda*. The movement ends on a lovely fadeout to *pianissimo*.

[33] Spohr, *Violinschule*, pp. 195-196; quoted in Stowell, *Violin Technique and Performance Practice*, p. 278.

The *Tempo di Menuetto* third movement is very peculiar, for it sounds like a rondo (which would have been a common choice for a final movement), but it immediately tempers the typical bright character of a rondo with its *dolce*, *piano* E minor tonality. The ternary rhythm of the menuetto also suggests the rondo form, but it does not follow the A-B-A-C-A or A-B-A-C-A-B-A pattern. In fact, even though it presents a recapitulation, one cannot even consider this a *sonata rondo*. The dotted rhythm of the violin's initial twenty-measure theme, over a simple undulating viola accompaniment, is often utilized as a cohesive motivic element throughout the various sections, but the A section is not repeated until the very end of the movement. Not unlike the first movement, this theme "flows" into the next contrasting theme, where the violin assumes a more determined character with its *staccato*, almost *martelé* eighth notes. It is then passed to the viola, and its characteristic rhythmic cell (dotted quarter note slurred to two sixteenth notes) becomes another motivic reminder throughout the remainder of the movement. It could be said that the composer favored equality between the two instruments over the rules of form, with the voices "conversing" through different tonalities until they reach C major, the ideal tonality for the viola. To the listener, this next section sounds like a 16-measure double period of solo material for the viola. However, Spohr preferred to prioritize the collaborative relationship between the two instruments, writing the antecedent phrases for the viola, with the violin continuing seamlessly through the consequent phrases of the theme and the conclusion of each period.

Working through a sequence based on dotted rhythms, the music moves toward an apparent return to E minor, but it actually shifts to the parallel tonality of E major for a *pianissimo* partial reprise of the initial theme of the movement. This is a false recapitulation, which leads to a surprising virtuosic outburst from both instruments through a succession of

ascending arpeggios and descending scales — a variation of the beginning of the first movement. This major "ray of sunlight" section eventually diminishes in dynamic, bringing the music back to its true recapitulation in E minor. With a familiar, poignant return to their point of departure, through a series of sequences dramatically charged with the dissonance of fully diminished seventh chords, the instruments find their way down to the lower registers for a final soft *au revoir*.

Bohuslav Martinů
Duo No. 1 For Violin and Viola *Three Madrigals* H. 313

"As a Czech I am in a practical sense a man without a country. It is one of few blessings left in life to find at least one place in the world where freedom exists for the artist and his art to survive. I cannot tell you what it means to have the privilege of being here in America with you."[34]

Born in 1890 in Polička, a rural town in Eastern Bohemia, Bohuslav Martinů took up the violin in his early youth and distinguished himself as a local prodigy. With the help of his fellow citizenry he obtained sufficient funding to attend the Conservatory in Prague at age 16, but after four years of study, first in violin and then composition, he was expelled for lack of motivation and self-discipline. Reflecting many decades later upon what would become his lifelong, obdurate non-conformist resistance to many aspects of traditional institutional training, he would later observe:

"In Prague we had a school of criticism that analyzed the work until you got dizzy. It was filled with all the problems of metaphysics, verbalisms, and obvious nonsense that had no relationship to the work itself."[35]

Back home, he spent World War I teaching privately while studying and writing on his own, and was only able to return to Prague as a member of the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra at age 30. There he took composition lessons with Joseph Suk for three years before moving to Paris to study with Albert Roussel. Over the following seventeen years in the City of Light he developed into a prolific and successful composer, experimenting with different styles and genres until he found his voice in the Neoclassical movement. Having enjoyed numerous

[34] Bouhslav Martinů, "An Interview in English" (radio broadcast, USA 1942). Accessed June 2021 at: https://www.martinu.cz/en/martinu/martinu-speaks/an-interview-in-english-usa-1942/
[35] Bouhslav Martinů, "Notebook from New York," trans. in Thomas D. Svatos, *Martinů's Subliminal States: A Study of the Composer's Writings and Reception, with a Translation of His "American Diaries"* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2018), p. 162.

successful premieres throughout Europe, Martinů chanced to make the acquaintance of the conductor Serge Koussevitsky, who introduced him to the American public with the premiere of *La Bagarre*, performed by the Boston Symphony in 1927.

In 1939, Czechoslovakia was invaded by the Nazis. As cultural attaché of the Czech opposition government in Paris, Martinů assisted many refugee artists who passed through town and composed the *Field Mass* cantata for the Free Czechoslovak Army Band, for which he was blacklisted by the Nazis. The imminent threat of German occupation convinced him to flee Paris in 1940 with his wife, seeking and eventually obtaining refuge in the United States in early 1941. Of the *Sinfonietta Giocosa*, the last piece he wrote just before leaving France under such precarious circumstances, his biographer Miloš Šafránek notes: "The work shows Martinů's will to overcome all his worries of that period, and is of a positive, joyful, and unmistakably Czech character. The hardships of this most unhappy period in Martinů's life were conquered by music."[36]

Once in America, Martinů encountered adversities of a different sort: he did not navigate the language well, nor was it easy for him to adjust to this new cultural landscape. But adjust he did, with such determination and success that he became one of the most widely respected and popular composers in mid-century America. Indeed, when with the end of World War II his French wife determined to make her way home, she was obliged to do so alone, as Martinů was reluctant to leave a country that been so hospitable to him. In 1946 he suffered a serious fall from a balcony and was convalescent for more than a year, during which period he turned to composing exclusively for chamber ensembles. Overcoming once again the anguish of the moment, he wrote the *Three Madrigals for Violin and Viola* H. 313 in 1947, dedicated to and

[36] Miloš Šafránek, *Bouhslav Martinů: The Man and His Music* (London: Dennis Dobson Ltd, 1946).

inspired by Lilian and Joseph Fuchs following their performance of a Mozart duo (either K. 423 or K. 424).[37] It seems fairly easily to identify Mozart's direct influence in the strikingly effervescent, Neoclassical character of the outer movements, and their collective dynamism does tend to suggest an optimistic approach to the difficult situation the composer was experiencing at the time; such is the case, for instance, with the *Sinfonietta Giocosa*. However, this is sheer speculation. I do not presume to any kind of definitive psychological analysis of the work, for, as Martinů himself rightfully pointed out, "Artistic creation is not consciousness, but *becomes* consciousness. I can consciously prepare a design, form, melody, etc., but the moment I am composing, I am not immediately aware of what I am doing."[38]

One notable characteristic of Martinů's style is the absence of sentimentality. This does not mean that his music is apathetic or dispassionate — quite the contrary. In fact, the composer found a means of expression that was sincere, and quite different from the Germanic tradition that imposed what he saw as an exceedingly melodramatic approach. Thus Martinů did not work with passionate melodies but rather with musical cells; he did not seek tragic pathos in his harmonies but focused instead on rhythm; and finally, he did not utilize extremely rich textures, preferring to imitate the polyphony of single voices found in the English madrigals of which he was so fond. Some writers have been tempted to attribute such characteristics to the composer's supposed battle with Asperger's Syndrome[39], but his writings suggest otherwise. Indeed, the

[37] Conrad David Bruderer, "A Study of Twentieth-Century Violin and Viola Duos" (PhD diss. University of California, San Diego, 1998), p. 251. Just as there are certain elements of Classical sonata form in the *Three Madrigals* that seem redolent of Mozart's violin and viola duos, their keys of B-flat major (Madrigals I and III) and G major (Madrigal II) suggest a possible reference to both of Mozart's duos, rather than one.
[38] Martinů, "The Ridgefield Diary," in Svatos, *Martinů's Subliminal States*, p. 135.
[39] *Martinů's Letters Home: Five Decades of Correspondence with Family and Friends*, ed. Isa Popelka (Luton: Toccata Press, 2012), p. 10: The editor quotes F. James Rybka's biography *Bohuslav Martinů: The Compulsion to Compose:* "In it, Rubla (the doctor son of Martinů's close friend Frank Rybka) argues that he suffered from Asperger's Syndrome. And that condition, Rybka suggests, was responsible for Martinů's seeming dispassion which, instead, was symptomatic of lack of empathy typically associated with his condition."

composer had consciously and deliberately developed an aversion to any superficial and ostentatious displays of tragedy in music:

> "For many years between the wars, mankind did not realize the drama and tragedy that was unfolding before his eyes that was directly affecting his chances for survival. (…)
>
> So why do we want a fictitious tragedy in the form of an artwork? Or is it possible that we understand only fictitious drama? Or is there some kind of desire in people to evoke fictitious drama, or danger, when nothing is being risked? Or to make oneself important, even if something is not real? People who talk about drama often come off as more elevated, but are they more humane? Is this simply the human condition? All of the artistic ideals seem to appear like a drama, as if they can only be achieved through battle, struggle, and tragedy! Why? Why didn't people realize the real tragedy before the war that was unmistakably affecting all human values?
>
> Why does our generation call for a 'climax' in each issue and art? And what is a 'climax,' really? A catharsis? It's almost like inviting someone over for lunch, and in the end, he breaks your furniture."[40]

Such views were close to those of Igor Stravinsky, whom Martinů greatly admired. But the public and critics were often unsympathetic to such an unexpectedly frank and straightforward assessment of the creative process, and Martinů found himself battling against a label that had often been attributed to his music: "cold."

> "Once in a program, I, too, wrote factual remarks, and the result was several letters, protests, and polemics in the press about how the composer should compose, that I wrote the work the way Mr. Kaiser builds ships (i.e., one a day), and that this is not in line with

[40] Martinů, "The Ridgefield Diary," in Svatos, *Martinů's Subliminal States*, pp. 134-135.

> artistic conceptualization. As soon as the composer's point of view becomes known, the listener assumes a dismissive attitude and judges the work to be 'cold.' Cold in relation to what? According to them, Stravinsky is only a rhythmicist. These things are wedged into the minds of the listeners to such an extent that you are almost defenseless."[41]

From his formative years in Prague to the height of his success, Martinů continued to share an open distaste for the contemporary trend of music criticism and analysis: "More often than not, we get essays and observations that have little to do with what the work is. (…) The single result is that we think that we understand the work better and that we have come closer to it, but all this amounts to is an illusion or artificial attitude."[42]

And so, in an effort to respect Martinů's values and thoughts, I will try to analyze his work in an objective way, rather than add meaning to details of which I do not know the philosophical or psychological origins.

Martinů once said that the fundamental inspirations for his music were three: "First, I would say the national music of my own country, Czechoslovakia. The second comes from the English madrigal and third from Debussy."[43] More specifically, he explained that Debussy's *Nocturnes* had made a particular impression on him.

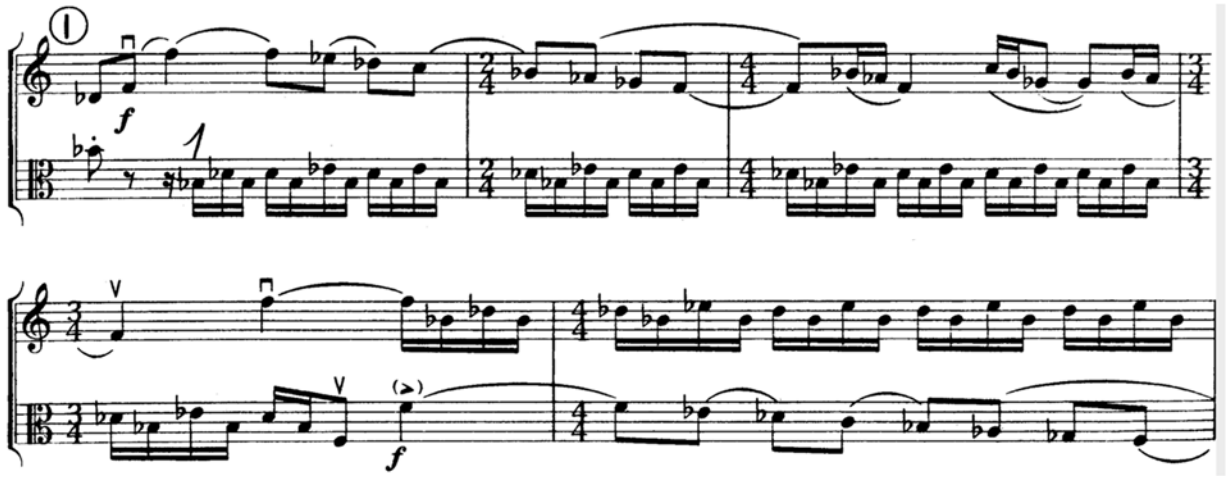
Madrigal I for violin and viola strikes the listener with its strong rhythmical character. As mentioned earlier, it is not a theme that opens the movement, but rather a succession of motivic cells. All of these cells are trademarks of Martinů's compositional style and are found in previous compositions by him. It is therefore rhythm that acts as a through-line to complete the composer's discourse, rather than a melody. When asked about his preference for strong

[41] Martinů,"Notebook from New York," in Ibid., pp. 157-158.
[42] Ibid., p. 162.
[43] See footnote 1 above.

rhythmical action in his pieces, the composer responded: “That is because I am a Czech. The national music of Czechoslovakia is rhythm. Strong, lithe rhythm. Furthermore, I use Czech folk songs as themes or I create thematic material similar to them in style.”[44]

The closest thing to a melody in this movement is a scalar descent, which distinguishes itself from its surrounding sections as it is not presented in canon or unison, but rather over an accompaniment:

Example 7: Madrigal I, mm. 14-18:



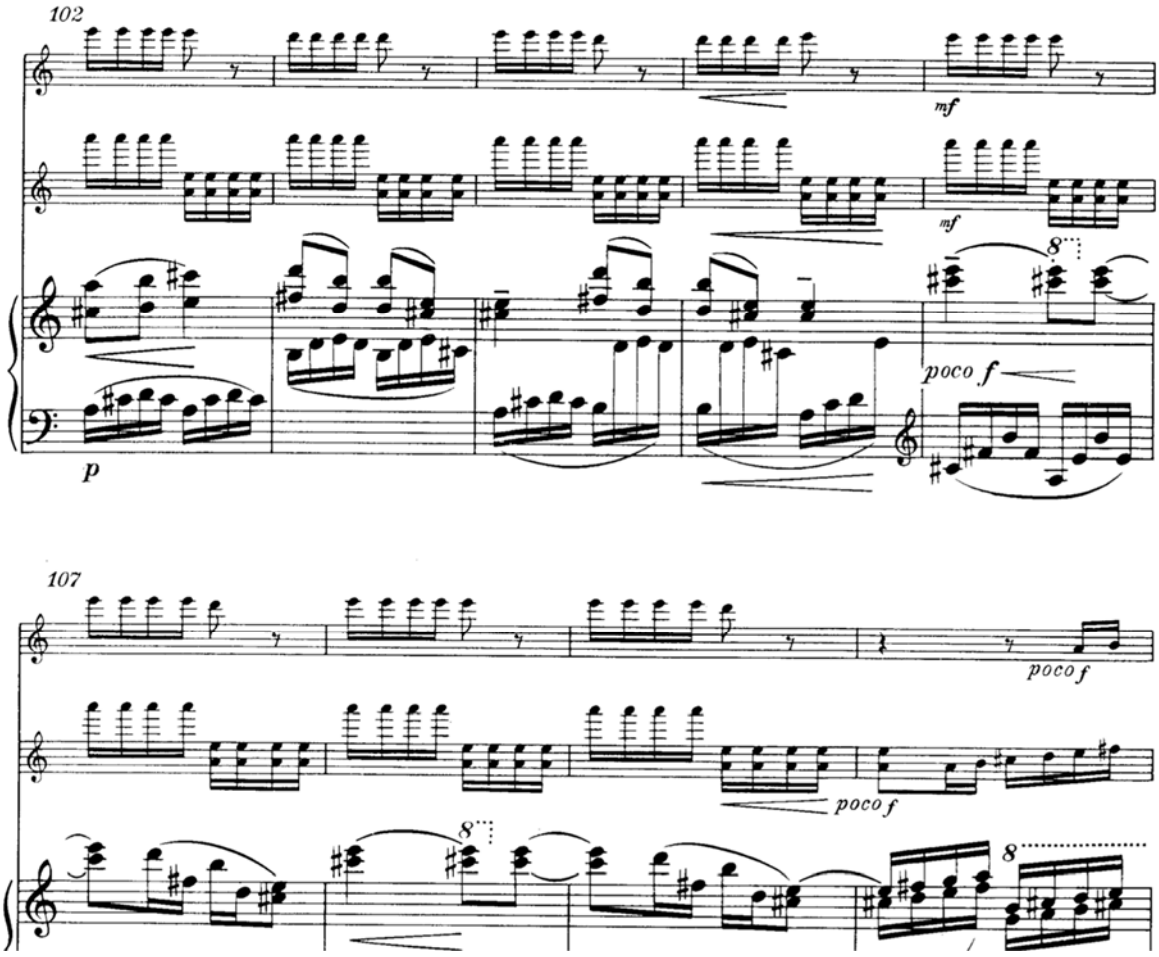
Throughout this Madrigal we witness homorhythmic, call-and-response, and canonic interaction. While the call-and-response sections are by nature exciting with their quick instrumental exchange, it is in the homorhythmic sections that the tight cohesion of the ensemble comes through: in most cases, the instruments play long successions of perfectly aligned sixteenth notes, to achieve the effect of one single, eight-stringed instrument filling the hall with its rich sound.

[44] Ibid.

Since imitation and canonic action are essential to the development of the movement, syncopation often appears as a natural consequence, making the interaction between the instruments ever more thrilling.

Four motivic cells are at the basis of the entire movement's "melodic" lines. Motivic Cell 1, which consists of a simple five-note figure on a single pitch, was already a *leitmotif* in Martinů's *Sonata* H. 245 for flute, violin, and piano:

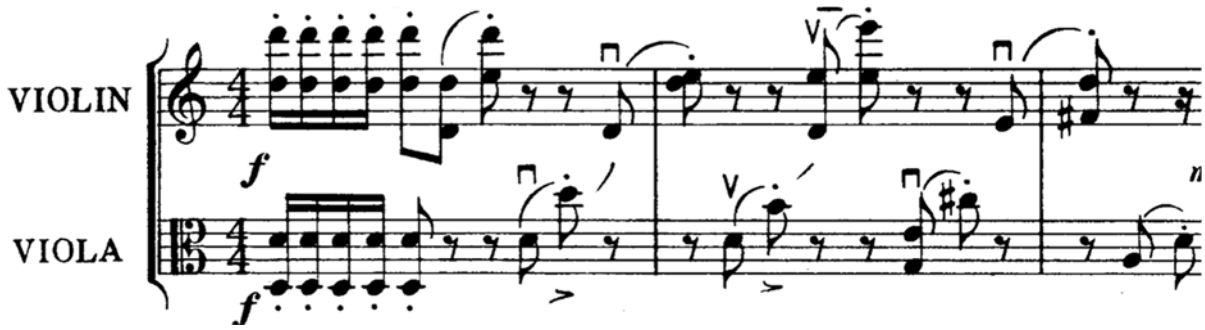
Example 8: Sonata for flute, violin, and piano, mm. 102-110:



In the case of Madrigal I, the entries of this cell are always marked *forte*.

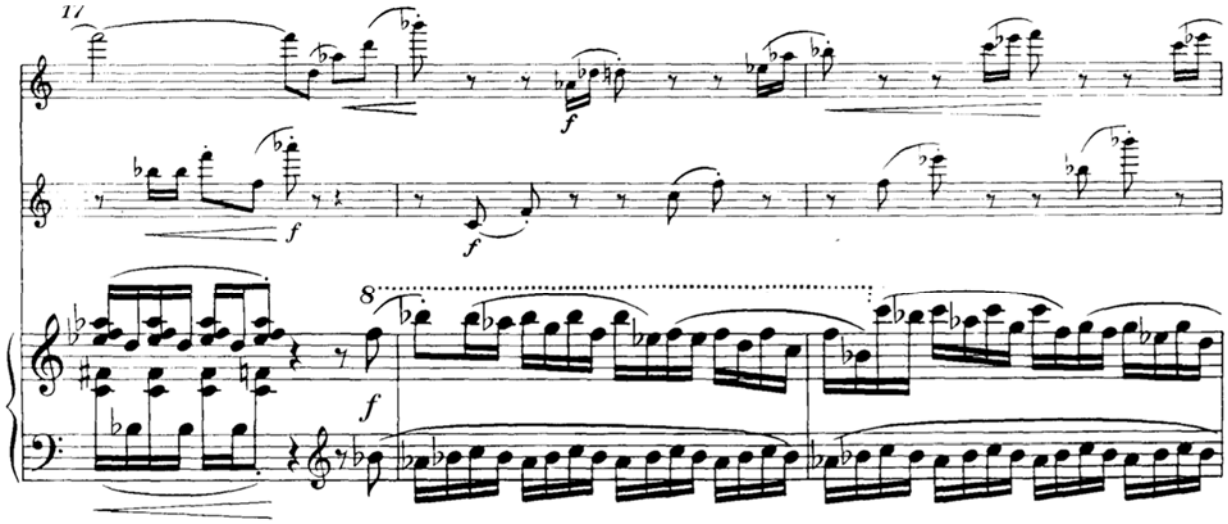
Motivic Cell 2, which appears immediately thereafter, is also a typical element found in the composer's previous pieces. It consists of an anacrusis-like figure of slurred ascending pairs of eighth notes:

Example 9: Madrigal I, mm. 1-3:



Again, note its presence in the *Sonata* for flute, violin, and piano:

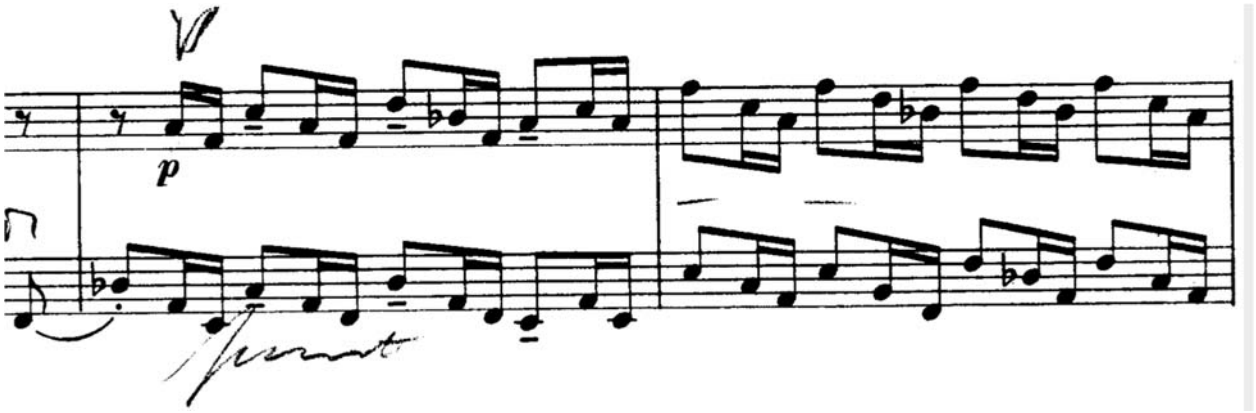
Example 10:



Motivic Cell 3 — consisting of an eighth note plus two sixteenth notes— is often seen as a nod to Baroque music, but it is also a typical element of Martinů's vocabulary. It is especially important in the third Madrigal, where it is often embellished with mordents over the eighth note.

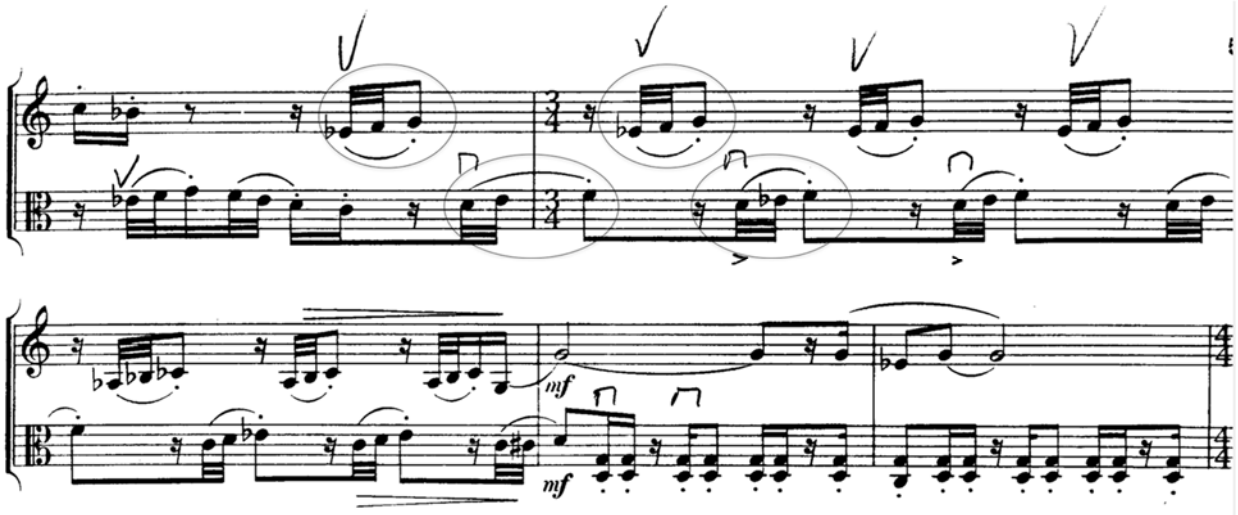
Its joyful, dance-like character can be traced back to English madrigals from the Renaissance (e.g., Thomas Morley's famous "Now is the Month of Maying").

Example 11: Madrigal I, mm. 24-25:

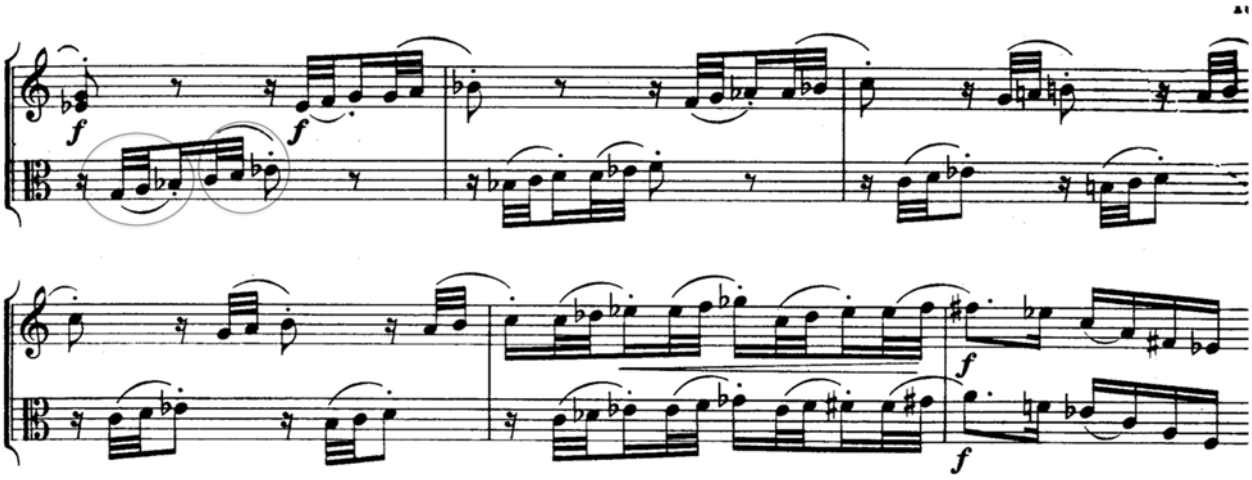


Motivic Cell 4 is derived from Baroque embellishments and will also become a key component of the third Madrigal:

Example 12: Madrigal I, mm 63-67:



Example 13: Madrigal III, mm. 23-28:



By modifying them from every conceivable angle, Martinů manages to develop these motivic cells into a discourse reminiscent of Classical sonata form but without ever creating a theme. Harmonic movement suggests traditional Western tonalities, but chords are often distorted by "bending" one or two components by a half-step. Modulation is achieved in unconventional ways, often by pivoting over one note, or by exploiting the enharmonic nature of accidentals. The most "traditional" type of modulation happens over several sequences, which are induced by the short nature of the motivic cells and mirror familiar Baroque procedures.

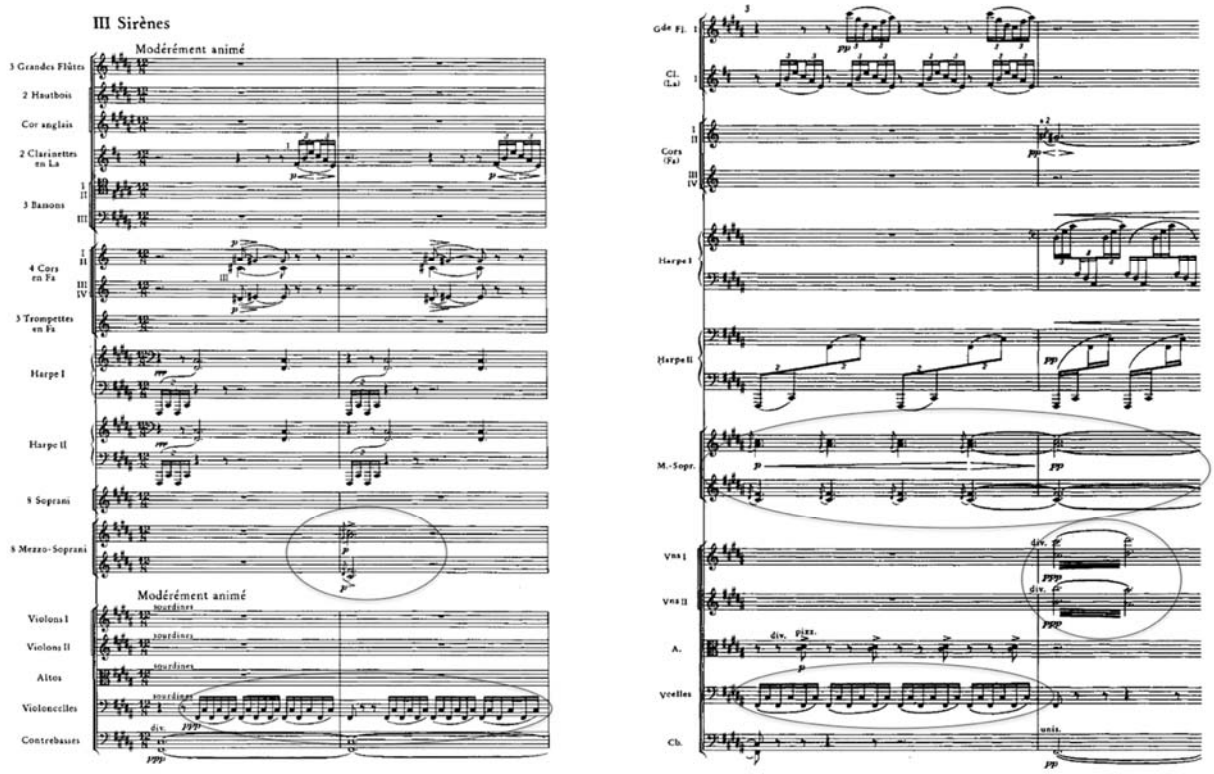
Because it consists of a single repeated note, Motivic Cell 1 is harmonically ambiguous. Its character seems to suggest a major tonality and Martinů does briefly favor D major, but with an E-flat here, a B-flat there, and finally, a D-flat, he completely turns the harmony around and soon moulds it to fit his own idiosyncratic purposes. Only with the impressive coda does he finally reveal his ultimate destination in the unequivocal tonality of B-flat major.

It is in the second Madrigal that Martinů blends the harmonic colors on his canvas in broad brush strokes of shared double-stop tremolos and trills, again "bending" one or two notes of a tritone up or down a half-step, for an effect that we might compare in contemporary terms to

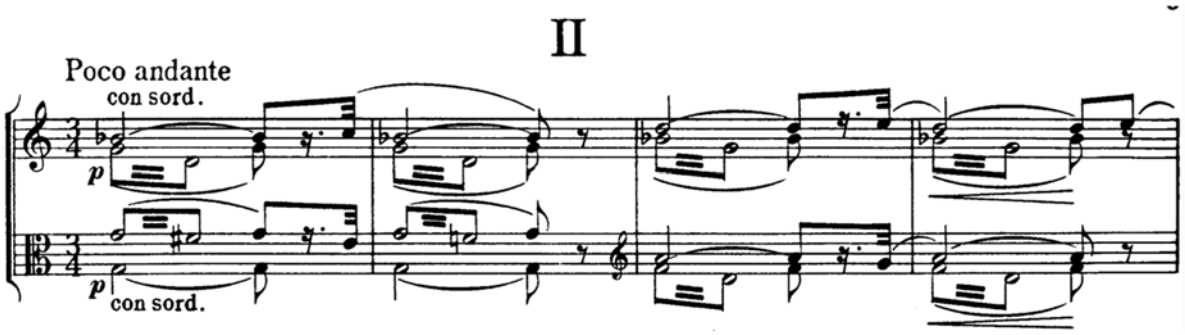
that of an auto-tuner. Rhythm is no longer the binding element: these trills and tremolos have become the protagonists, and chromaticism consequently plays an important role in the hazy, fog-bound direction of the musical discourse.

Perhaps Martinů had Debussy's third *Nocturne*, *Sirènes*, in mind when he wrote this second Madrigal. Note the tremolos in the cello at the beginning of the *Nocturne*, combined with the voices' grace notes:

Example 14: C. Debussy, *Sirènes*, mm. 1-4:



Example 15: Madrigal II, mm. 1-4:



The second Madrigal acts as a "slow" middle movement, but it strays from the norms of Classical form. In a train-of-thought unfolding of events, it moves from the initially mysterious tremolo part to a more expansive section where the instruments "vocalize" rhapsodically through alternately soaring and undulating patterns of scales and broken chords. At the double bar the trills return as the ebb and flow continues in quiet canonic fashion, finally reaching its destination in a choral, quasi-devotional lullaby that then slips slowly away like the retreating tide. B-flat major is once again the point of arrival, as it was for the first Madrigal.

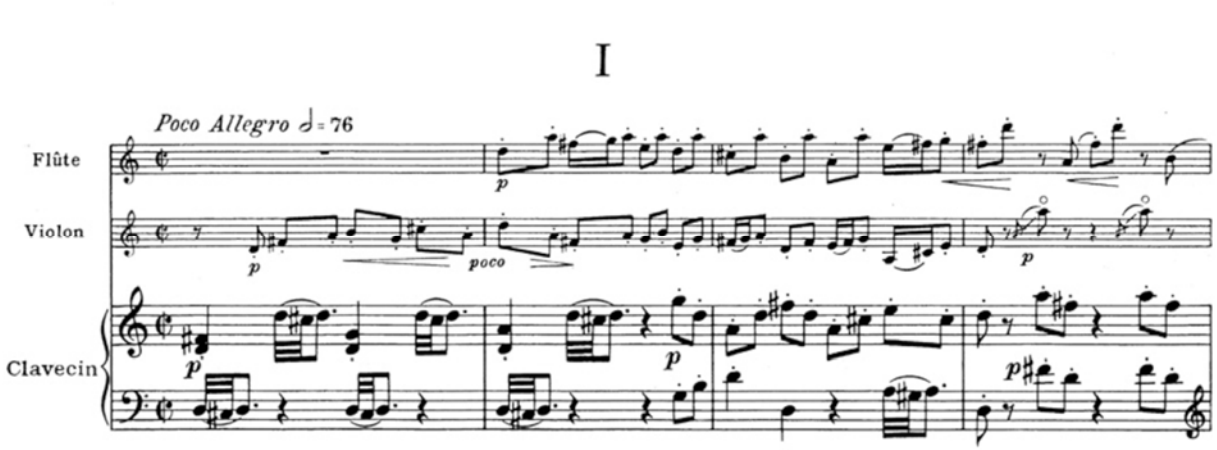
Madrigal III is, per both Classical and Baroque tradition, the most impressive and festive of the set. There are relatively fewer complications in the harmonic fabric of this Madrigal: the tonal centers are fairly transparent, with a preponderance of major chords reinforcing its joyous character. As a Classical third movement would do, it also "recapitulates" elements of the previous movements: the motivic cells of the first Madrigal are structurally significant (only the first one is missing), and trills and tremolos also make brief periodic appearances, if more pungently so than their counterparts in the second Madrigal.

The explosive high D that begins the Madrigal is a veritable attention grabber, much like the first "Hey!" in Martinů's *Czech Madrigal* H. 278 no. 4, "Hey! We've got goods to sell," where the music launches into a canonic setting of the text suggesting the lively atmosphere of a

local fair. It is not surprising, therefore, that this third Madrigal, with its opening "theme" that could well be the subject of a Baroque two-part invention — in fact, canons and sequences prevail throughout — has been described as an "exuberant mashup of hoedown and Bach invention."[45]

Mordents are a particularly whimsical touch, even to comic effect when combined with the puckish "skipping" figures of Motivic Cell 4 from Madrigal I. This is not the first time we encounter Martinů "playing" with mordents: note his use of fully notated mordents in the keyboard part of *Promenades* H. 274 for flute, violin, and harpsichord:

Example 16:



There is an impressive, steadily pulsating surge of dynamic and texture that rivals the rich sonority of a string quartet over the 16-measure sequence before the *Poco meno*, followed by a slow and meditative *Moderato* bridge passage to the "recapitulation" in G major. With the arrival of the *Allegro* coda, a gradual rhythmic acceleration, through iterations of Motivic Cell 4 and mordent-embellished Motivic Cell 3, heightens the thrill of its exuberant, inexorable drive to the end.

[45] John Henken, Hollywood Bowl program notes. Accessed June 2021 at: https://www.hollywoodbowl.com/musicdb/pieces/4244/three-madrigals-for-violin-and-viola

SECOND DISSERTATION RECITAL

ARIANNA DOTTO, VIOLIN

NATALIA BEZUGLOVA, PIANO
JOACHIM ANGSTER, VIOLA
NATHANIEL PIERCE, CELLO

Sunday, March 8, 2020
Walgreen Drama Center, Stamps Auditorium
8:00 PM

Sonate für Violine allein, Op. 11 no. 6 (1919) — Paul Hindemith (1895-1963)
- Mäßig schnell
- Siziliano: Mäßig bewegt
- Finale: Lebhaft

Fuga for solo Violin (1953) — Alfred Schnittke (1934-1998)

Divertimento from *Le Baiser de la Fée*, arranged for violin and piano by S. Dushkin (1928) — Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971)
- Sinfonia
- Danses suisses
- Scherzo
- Pas de deux:
  a) Adagio
  b) Variation
  c) Coda

Intermission

Trio for Violin, Viola, and Violoncello (1985) — Alfred Schnittke (1934-1998)
- Moderato
- Adagio

Second Dissertation Recital: Program Notes
March 8, 2020, 8 P.M.

Paul Hindemith
Sonate für Violine allein Op. 11 no. 6

The history of this sonata is quite peculiar: written in the period between 1917 and 1919, it was Hindemith's first sonata for a solo string instrument. Although it was premiered by Hindemith's colleague and concertmaster of the Frankfurt Opera, Hans Lange, the piece was never considered for publication, and after the composer's death almost half of the sonata was lost. The remaining fragments were therefore performed only on rare occasions until, many years later, in 2002, a manuscript copy of the entire sonata was recovered and "premiered" a second time by Kristian Tezlaff.

In 1917, Hindemith was still principally a violinist and probably envisaged himself performing this virtuosic sonata himself. Though we do not know precisely when his friend Lange performed it, we can only suppose that the premiere took place shortly after its composition, for Hindemith soon set the piece aside for its somewhat "immature" style (it was only in the 1920s that the composer felt he had achieved a fully personal and mature compositional style). This is, in fact, the reason for which Hindemith never decided to submit the manuscript to Schott for consideration for publication, instead consigning the piece to a dusty corner of neglected memory once he had become a full-time violist. Yet its style is very much the result of his steadfast conviction that composers in his time ought to "purify" their music from the entropy that was characteristic of the Expressionist genre.

The reference to Bach's works for solo violin, and to the sonata BWV 1001 in particular, is evident in many aspects of this sonata: from its tonality (G minor) to the title

choices for the movements, the sonata is clearly an homage to Bach's own first sonata for solo violin. But was Hindemith paying homage to Bach alone? Interestingly, he began composing this sonata shortly after Max Reger's death, and to think that his choice of genre and techniques for this piece was not only inspired by Reger's unique style, but also intended as a tribute towards the composer whom he so profoundly admired, would not be an unreasonable assumption.

1.Mäßig schnell.

Austere and resonant tones characterize the first movement of this sonata, which opens in a manner suggesting the Fuga from Bach's BWV 1001 sonata, with the same main rhythmic motif (eighth note + two sixteenth notes). Hindemith's bowing indications were also largely those which any early 20th century violinist would have adopted to perform Bach's Fuga— indeed, as Bach's sonatas and partitas were often approached as "etudes," it comes as no surprise that Hindemith's more forceful sections should sound quasi pedantic. Yet by way of contrast, the softer sections call for short bow strokes, a "hopping" *sautillé* applied to the same rhythmic pattern, suggesting a playful alternative to the excessively rigorous style which was so commonly applied to Bach's music.

Harmony in this movement is also solidly grounded "in the style of Bach": Hindemith's "signature" surfaces most clearly in his excursions into linear chromaticism — a trait which, once again, he inherited from Reger's distinctive style— together with passages consisting of "fluttering embellishments," chromatically arranged fast and virtuosic triplets, both a personal take on the Baroque embellishments which Bach fully

notated in his sonatas and partitas, and a characteristic which was to become a singular component of his style.

The dynamics themselves seem to allude to Bach's frequent *forte - piano* indications that appear throughout most of the solo violin works. Perhaps in ironic response to such "simplistic" contrasts, Hindemith specifically marked *mezzoforte* for the main subject, as if it need not be defined by decibels to engage the listener's attention and subsequent recognition.

Not only does this movement pay respect to Bach and Reger; its heroic and solemn character is doubtless Hindemith's personal contribution to the continuing eminence of German music, considered at the time by so many of his fellow countrymen to be superior to all others.

2. Siziliano: Mäßig bewegt.

Unlike the first and third movements, this movement was written shortly after Hindemith returned home from service in WWI. It was the last piece to be added to the sonata, the remainder having been penned before the composer had gone to war. His father had enrolled in the army as a volunteer and died in combat in 1915; letters written at the western front reveal a Hindemith who was "sick" of the "devilish war" he was fighting in. Perhaps reminiscent of these wartime experiences, the atmosphere here is something of a melancholy counterpart to that of Bach's Siciliano from BWV 1001: whereas Bach set his Siciliano in the tonality of B-flat major, Hindemith chose to remain in G minor; and while Bach's movement is a steady, stately dance, Hindemith cast the characteristic dotted rhythm in poignant, lingering tones, as if it were more of an undulating, mournful

barcarolle. Linear chromaticism is exploited here at even greater length, in order to achieve a sense of grief and sorrow through harmonic tension.

Not one dynamic indication appears throughout this movement, perhaps to heighten the uncertainty and seeming lack of destination, which he so successfully achieves through the use of chromatic "sighs" (mainly, sequences of descending chromatic thirds) that guide the harmony in its search for solace. A work of incredibly innovative style, this movement constitutes one of the most beautiful moments in all of the solo violin repertoire.

3. Finale: Lebhaft.

After a long and sorrowful interlude, the "Finale" comes as an abrupt surprise. Here the character is neither noble, austere, nor melancholic; rather, it is an all but constant, precipitous rush of sixteenth notes. The tempo indication— Lebhaft ("lively")— bears little to no connection with the previous movements; through off-beat accents and billowing crescendos, Hindemith creates waves of momentum towards the much awaited *fortissimo.* There is no more time for deep thought; action, energy, and vigor seem to erase all that has come before. Not unlike the first movement, this piece is replete with contrasting dynamics, with rapid bow strokes ranging from triple-piano *staccatissimo* to triple-forte *alla corda*, so fast in fact that if the performer were to follow the indications exactly as written, nothing but noise would result. The central section of this tri-partite movement is both virtuosic and melodic, with many gossamer scales and arpeggios each containing one or two notes to be highlighted, for together they form a melody of their own. This rhapsodic, reflective moment then gives way to the wild and unconstrained return of the "A" section, which eventually bursts into an astonishing explosion of loud and fast chords,

all descending chromatically through linear harmony once again, and flowing into a final, accelerated recapitulation of the main theme that reaches the "presto" so quickly that both performer and listener are left breathless for the experience.

PERFORMANCE PRACTICE OF BACH'S SONATAS AND PARTITAS, BWV 1001-1006

A common misconception is that Bach's music was played in a Romantic or hyper-expressive way since the late 1800s. This does not seem to be the case with every violinist: with regard to vibrato, two distinct schools of thought prevailed among European violinists. The German school, of which Joseph Joachim (at the turn of the century), and later his pupil Leopold Auer were the main exponents, revered the thought expressed by Louis Spohr in 1832 that vibrato should be used very rarely, and only on expressive notes. The Franco-Belgian school led by Eugène Ysaÿe, on the other hand, promoted the use of continuous vibrato.

This divide is of particular interest for Hindemith's sonata Op. 11 no. 6, as Hindemith seems to have preceded Ysaÿe in the composition of a sonata directly inspired from Bach's BWV 1001. Around 1920, Ysaÿe heard his colleague Szigeti perform Bach's BWV 1001 sonata and was inspired to write his own set of six sonatas for solo violin, each inspired by one of Bach's sonatas and partitas. Unfortunately, we have no recording of Szigeti's performance of Bach in the 1920s, but we do have a recording from 1955-56. As can be heard from this recording, Szigeti's performance of Bach is very Romantic, with a wide and continuous vibrato and a rather heavy marcato bow stroke . Is this the style that inspired Ysaÿe, or did the stylistic fashion radically change over the first half of the century?

We know that Szigeti was a member of the Hungarian school, and one of Hubay's most successful students. Hubay, like Leopold Auer (who was also Hungarian), studied in Berlin with

Joseph Joachim and can thus be identified as a disciple of the German violin school. Auer followed Joachim in advocating minimal vibrato, however recordings of Hubay's students from the 1920s display a tasteful but not absent use of vibrato. We should not assume that Szigeti always played in this way; it is conceivable that his performance choices evolved during these years.

Joachim oversaw the first critical edition of Bach's sonatas and partitas (1879) and the recording of this bourrée is the first recording in history of a violinist. In his recording, not only does Joachim apply vibrato very sparingly, but he also uses a much more flippant and bouncy bow stroke. This style is in some ways closer to the style we have decided to be more historically correct.

The first appearance of a selection from Bach's solo sonatas and partitas occurred in an anthology of music for violin in 1798: *L'Art du Violon* by the French violinist and composer Jean-Baptiste Cartier (1765-1841). Sarah Vandemoortele remarks on the presence of the fugue from the A minor sonata in this anthology: "That Cartier added this fugue to his treatise points to a certain degree of pedagogical importance of the Sonatas and Partitas in their reception, an aspect that we will re-encounter in many of the subsequent editions[46]." Later editions defined such sonatas and partitas as "STUDIO" (études), and it became customary to add a piano accompaniment to them (the most famous being that by Robert Schumann, published in 1854). Another practice was that of adding an extra stave with fingerings and bowings, with practice indications from the various pedagogues who happened to oversee the editions. Doubtless the strictly pedagogical approach would have influenced the bow strokes generally utilized for Bach's fugues in particular: nobody plays études the way they play concert pieces.

[46] Sarah Vandermoortele, "Studying the editions of Bach's Sonatas and Partitas: Early prints and the Leipzig editions" – last accessed June 2019 at violinist.com

In the year 1950, Hindemith stated: "We can be sure that Bach was thoroughly content with the means of expression at hand in voices and instruments, and if we want to perform his music according to his intentions we ought to restore the conditions of performance of that time."[47]

Hindemith was reputedly one of the first promoters of the Historically Informed Performance Practice; John Butt remarks that "Both Hindemith's historicist attitude and his productions of early music were of tremendous influence on Nikolaus Harnoncourt who, perhaps more than anyone over the next twenty years, made the case for HIP." In his analysis, John Butt also describes Harnoncourt's dedication to HIP as a reflection of a "pessimistic" modernist attitude towards the music of his time: the sense in his work is "that we have been in a prolonged state of cultural decline, one that HIP – by re-introducing us to conceptions of music more varied than our bland present – may rectify."[48] This perspective is in many ways close to Hindemith's view that the expressionist music had caused for a degeneration in the world of classical music, and that a return to Bach's music and style would help find the way to greatness again.

The first critical edition of Bach's sonatas and partitas was not published until 1879, overseen by Joseph Joachim, who brought the set back to the concert halls by performing them during his tournées. It therefore comes as no surprise that shortly thereafter, Max Reger would have written three suites for solo viola, clearly inspired by Bach's suites for solo violin and cello, and that two prominent composers like Hindemith and Ysaÿe would have re-discovered and taken inspiration from these works. Furthermore, Hindemith thought Reger and Bach were of similar mind: "if ever a musician composed unhampered by scholarly considerations and with

[47] Nikolaus Harnoncourt, *Baroque Music Today: Music as Speech* (Singapore: Amadeus Press, 1988), pp. 111-112.
[48] John Butt, *Playing with History: The Historical Approach to Musical Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 3-4.

rabid creative impetus, rabid to the point of carelessness, it was Reger. Bach's musical mind must have been similar, although we always sense in him a sober pre-eminence over and of his actions that prevents him from getting lost in nebulousness or ebbing away into platitudes."[49]

Alfred Schnittke
Fuga for solo violin

Composed in 1953 when Schnittke was a young student living in Moscow, the *Fuga for solo violin* was discovered among the material that remained in his archive following his death in 1998. Its studious yet provocative approach to the diatonic contrapuntal format represents an important evolutionary link in Schnittke's characteristic assimilation of multiple stylistic influences over the course of his career, continually navigating between the German and Russian polarities of his cultural heritage. Indeed, one can well imagine the impact he inevitably absorbed, then but an impressionable youth of 19, from the death of Stalin in March of that same year, initiating a brief but turbulent period of political upheaval and attempts to establish a more enlightened Soviet policy toward the West before the definitive rise of Khrushchev and the beginning of the Cold War. Schnittke already demonstrates considerable technical knowledge here, even incorporating an interesting "orchestrational" pizzicato treatment of the theme, while nonetheless seeming to wrestle with the expressive potential of the genre itself, as if struggling to peer between the temporary fissure of Soviet censure to get a better glimpse of the world beyond.

The *Fuga* was dedicated to Oleh Krysa, but it was premiered by the violinist only one year after the composer's death, in 1999 (Ukrainian Institute of America, New York).

[49] Hindemith, *J. S. Bach: Heritage and Obligation* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1952), p. 21.

Igor Stravinsky
Divertimento from *Le Baiser de la Fée,* arranged for violin and piano by S. Dushkin

Following the composition of *Oedipus Rex*, Stravinsky embarked in a new project which would become the first of his fully Neoclassical ballets: *Apollo.* The year was 1927, and six months before the premiere of *Apollo,* Stravinsky received another commission, this time from Ida Rubinstein, who had recently founded a new ballet company in Paris. Initially, Rubinstein had asked permission to perform *Apollo*, but the impresario and founder of the *Ballets Russes*, Sergei Diaghilev, refused her request. She therefore decided to commission a new ballet from the composer.

Stravinsky writes: "That summer (1928), I wasn't allowed to rest. I spent it in Echarvines, on the lac d'Annecy. I had rented a room in the house of a stonemason (…) and had a piano installed there." Stravinsky explained that it was difficult for him to concentrate on his work while surrounded by people who could have heard him in the pension where he lived with his family. He therefore sought peace and calm in what he had hoped would be an isolated room, close to the pension where his family was living. He was "cruelly deceived": the stonemason and his family lived in the adjacent rooms, and Stravinsky was regularly disturbed by a "foul smell of salami and rancid oil which made me nauseous." After a series of complaints on the part of the composer, the stonemason took it upon himself to insult his wife and screaming children, "terrifying them with his menaces." This happened every day, until one evening, Stravinsky distinctly heard the wife of the stonemason cry for help. Suspecting a case of domestic violence, the composer asked the owner of the pension for explanation, and the case escalated to the point that the village's mayor came to reprimand the stonemason for his violent acts. But the

stonemason's wife took his defense, claiming that she had no complaints to make against him.

"It was in this atmosphere that I began working on the music for the *Baiser de la fée*." Stravinsky recalled the proposition that led him to compose this ballet:

> "I was still finishing the music for *Apollo*, when toward the end of the preceding year (1927), I received a proposition to compose a ballet for Mme Ida Rubinstein's performances. The painter Alexandre Benois, who worked for her ballet company, sent me two projects. One of these looked very promising, for it envisaged the creation of an oeuvre which would be inspired by Tchaikovsky's music. My tenderness for this composer and, additionally, the fact that the performances […] were to coincide with the 35th anniversary of his death, convinced me to accept this offer. This gave me the occasion to pay a sincere tribute to the admirable talent of this man."[50]

Stravinsky had already developed a fondness for Tchaikovsky's music in 1921, when Diaghilev had commissioned him to orchestrate the music that Tchaikovsky had originally cut from *The Sleeping Beauty* and left in their piano-score versions.

For this project, Ida Rubinstein offered Stravinsky a commission of $6000, six times the fee he had received for *Apollo.* By this time the relationship between Stravinsky and Diaghilev had been deteriorating to the point of non-communication. Stravinsky's decision to work with Rubinstein did not help the situation: with Diaghilev and Rubinstein's rapport being reputedly tense, it pushed the two men even further apart, causing Diaghilev to make a series of rude remarks regarding both Stravinsky and Rubinstein: "Igor, my first son, has

[50] Igor Stravinsky, *Chroniques de ma vie* (Paris: Editions Denoël, 1962), pp. 176-177, my translations.

given himself up entirely to the love of God and cash." "[I remain] indignant that people such as Stravinsky […] should deign to associate themselves with an undertaking so inferior."[51] Diaghilev would die the following year, leaving the composer with a deep spiritual void.

In his book *Expositions and Developments*, the composer claimed to have extracted the story from Hans Christian Andersen's "The Snow Queen," but Gianfranco Vinay rightfully recognizes the plot to be derived instead from "The Ice Maiden."[52] Stravinsky recalled his first reading of Andersen's story: "A fairy marks a newborn child with her mysterious kiss and separates him from his mother. Twenty years later, when the young man achieves the height of happiness in his life (being engaged to a young girl), she gives him yet another fated kiss and abducts him from earth to forever possess him and his ultimate happiness."

Stravinsky chose this story because it represented an allegory of Tchaikovsky's life: "The muse had equally marked [Tchaikovsky] with the fated kiss of which the mysterious trace can be heard in all of the musical creation of this great artist."[53] Vinay interprets the allegory of the kiss to refer directly to Tchaikovsky's homosexuality, a "symbol of predestination to an existence devoid of love (heterosexual)." Furthermore, the double abduction of the plot— of the child from his mother, and of the young man from his fiancée— "alludes to two crucial episodes in Tchaikovsky's biography: the death of his mother, and his failed marriage, followed by his own escape."[54]

[51] Charles M. Joseph, *Stravinsky's Ballets* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2011), p. 138.
[52] Gianfranco Vinay, *Stravinsky Neoclassico* (Venezia: Marsilio Editori, 1987), p. 70, my translation.
[53] Stravinsky, p. 178.
[54] Vinay, p. 71.

Stravinsky imagined the story to take place in one of the most town beautiful European towns: Interlaken (Switzerland). He imagined the dancers to be dressed in classic white skirts, in full Neoclassical spirit. The ballet is subdivided in four continuous scenes, forming a single act.

From a musical standpoint, the composer chose to honor Tchaikovsky's memory by quoting and developing his melodies, restricting himself to those works which had never been orchestrated. Given his recent experience with Tchaikovsky's ballet, it is not surprising that many of the characteristics of the score for *Le Baiser de la Fée* recall those of *The Sleeping Beauty*. But Stravinsky didn't limit himself to creating an "outright pastiche of *The Sleeping Beauty*," as Francis Maes states. Indeed, he carefully chose the pieces he was quoting with reference to their poetic texts, or to their titles, relating them to the storyline of his own ballet. The first scene derives its melody from Tchaikovsky's *Berceuse de la tempête,* and as Vinay notes, it was clearly chosen to set the image of the mother lulling her child during a storm. This theme can be heard throughout the Sinfonia of the *Divertimento.*

In the second scene, Stravinsky quotes some of Tchaikovsky's works involving popular themes, with festive and dancing characters (for example, the *Humoresque op. 10 no. 2*, and *Rêverie du soir op. 19 n. 1*). Most recognizable are the quotations of Tchaikovsky's *Natha valse op. 51 no. 4* (heard in *Le Baiser*, "La Valse:" — not present in the *Divertimento*), and of his *Scherzo humoristique op. 19 n. 2* and *Feuillet d'album op. 19 n. 3* (heard in *Le Baiser*, "Allegretto grazioso," and in the *Divertimento*, "Scherzo (Au Moulin)"). Yet throughout the ballet, Stravinsky keeps returning to the *Berceuse de la tempête*, a theme which assumes what Vinay defines a character of "hypnotic steadiness."

The choice to elaborate and orchestrate Tchaikovsky's melodies in particular can be traced to a letter of Stravinsky to Diaghilev, in which he referred to his work on *The Sleeping Beauty* as a "great satisfaction for me as a musician," for "Tchaikovsky possessed the power of *melody*, the center of gravity for every symphony, opera, or ballet composed by him. […] The fact is that he was a 'melodist,' a talent which is extremely rare and precious."

The première of *Le baiser de la fée*, conducted by the composer in 1928 at the Paris Oper, was not a success: Stravinsky quickly came to realize that Rubinstein was not a good match for his work. In fact, he had fought with the ballerina and with the painter Benois, for he felt they did not respect his guidelines. Following a series of rehearsals in which the composer imposed his presence and attempted to change the direction taken by his colleagues, he had finally found himself forced to accept their terms with Rubinstein's menace to retire the ballet from the stages. Given such circumstances, *Le Baiser de la Fée* was quickly forgotten and only reprised in 1937 in the US by Georges Balanchine. This time the ballet earned raving reviews and soon became a great success overseas. Was Diaghilev right after all? One might wonder if the ballet would have flourished, had Balanchine already choreographed it in Paris. After all, the composer recalled that "On the 12th of June [1928] I conducted the première of *Apollon musagète* at the Théâtre Sarah-Bernahardt in Paris. […] The *maître de ballet* Georges Balanchine had arranged the dances precisely as I had wished, in the spirit of the classical style. From this point of view, it was a success— indeed, the first attempt to regenerate the academic, classical dance in a contemporary oeuvre which had been composed for this purpose."[55]

[55] Stravinsky, p. 175.

Alfred Schnittke
Trio for violin, viola, and violoncello

"Nineteenth-century music — Schumann, Tchaikovsky, Verdi — can be passed, as they used to say in those times, 'from heart to heart.' But for twentieth-century music we cannot rely solely on our emotions — we must use also our reason and our intellect."[56]

Responding to a commission by the Alban Berg Foundation to write a piece commemorating the centennial of Berg's birth, Alfred Schnittke composed this String Trio in 1985. It was a pivotal year for both the Soviet Union and the composer himself: Mikhail Gorbachev became general secretary of the Communist Party on 11 March, initiating a period of political and economic reform with the policies of *glasnost* and *perestroika*; and on 19 July Schnittke suffered the first of several strokes over the remaining years of his life that would compromise the right side of his body and lead to the gradual abandonment of the intensely vibrant, expressive vocabulary in this piece for a more rarified, ascetic style. The premiere, which took place on 2 June at the Moscow Conservatory, performed by Oleh Krysa, Fyodor Druzhinin, and Valentin Feigin, proved to be the last time Schnittke was able to attend a public performance of his music in good health.[57] Yuri Bashmet scored the piece for string orchestra two years later, in 1987, with the title Trio Sonata, and Schnittke subsequently transcribed it for violin, violoncello and piano in 1992, dedicating it to the cardiologist who saved his life after his second stroke in July 1991.

[56] Valentina Klolopova, "Alfred Schnittke's Works: A New Theory of Musical Content," in *Seeking the Soul: The Music of Alfred Schnittke*, comp. George Odam (London: Guidhall School Press, 2002), p. 44.
[57] "In the music of the trio one could already hear strange and melancholic notes; there was a sense of deep sadness and bitter nostalgia. 'Although the trio was inspired by Alban Berg's music, it seemed to have been written much earlier than this composer lived,' Schnittke joked. In the lyricism of the trio some of the musicians could hear unusual, grim, almost alarming notes — perhaps premonitions of the composer's imminent illness?" Alexander Ivashkin, *Alfred Schnittke* (London: Phaidon Press, 1996), pp. 188-189.

Born and raised in a German enclave of the Soviet Union by his Jewish father and German Catholic mother, Schnittke often asserted that he felt like an outsider.[58] The two formative years he spent as an adolescent with his family in Vienna directly after the end of the Second World War undoubtedly helped shape his future tastes in music, and when the Soviet Union enjoyed a brief cultural "thaw" under Khrushchev during the early 60's, Schnittke was able to exploit this brief window of opportunity, thanks to Moscow's policy of peaceful coexistence with the West, to become familiar with the scores of music by Schoenberg, Webern, and Berg among others (as noted by Gavin Dixon, "Much of his music engages directly with the Austro-German symphonic tradition, and the influences of Berg and particularly Mahler often seem as strong as those from any Russian predecessor")[59], initiating a period of experimentation with serial techniques adapted to his quest for a new expressive vehicle capable of embracing a multiplicity of idioms into a kind of universal language.[60] Schnittke also seems to have been strongly influenced by the "vertical montage" technique pioneered by Soviet cinema, having become a prolific film composer (thereby eluding the direct and often punitive control of the

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[58] "I haven't a drop of Russian blood in me, even though I have lived here all my life. In the second place, I am constantly aware that I have a German half. This has nothing to do with how much German I know, or the fact that I spent two years of my childhood in Vienna. It is predetermined by the fact that my German forebears, who lived here for two hundred years, remained Germans. Not, in a certain sense, the kind of Germans who grew and flourished in the West, but the kind who seem to have preserved the psychological characteristics peculiar to Germans in an earlier time. [...]

Furthermore, I have in every respect experienced an enormous influence from German culture, German literature and of course the strongest possible influence from German music. Given this, it is clear that without any effort on my part, the German side of my character remains a second powerful force." Alfred Schnittke, *A Schnittke Reader*, ed. Alexander Ivashkin, trans. John Goodlife (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002), p. 21.

[59] Gavin Dixon, Preface to *Schnittke Studies* (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2017), p. xxiv.

[60] " In the 1960s and 1970s, ambitious, young Soviet theorists assimilated and advocated compositional developments including serialism, twelve-tone writing, and other expanded approaches, many of which they gathered into the hopeful category "new tonality" [...]:

1) Basis on a twelve-step row instead of a seven-step scale
2) A strict order of intervallic relationships between pitches
3) A tight coordination of horizontal and vertical, originating from a single intonational complex. [...]

As Soviet theorists struggled to stay abreast with European and American compositional developments, they fixated on serialism and twelve-tone practices. Yet, in so doing, they ignored a new Soviet approach to tonality found within the even more varied, diverse, and all-encompassing, domain of polystylism. Tonality, and its symbolic baggage, was the anchor for polystylism's representative richness. A majority of collage or pastiche compositions were founded on tonal quotations and tonal modeling, but tonal gestures, often of limited scope, operated along the entire spectrum of polystylistic ways and means." Peter J. Schmelz, "Silvestrov, Schnittke, and Polystylism in the Late USSR," in *Tonality Since 1950*, ed. Felix Wörner, Ullrich Scheideler, and Philip Rupprecht (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2017), pp. 233-235.

Soviet Composers' Union) through the 60s.[61] Though often described as a dissident Soviet composer and the natural heir to Shostakovich, he was actually something of a cultural conservative straddling two traditions, "German rationalism on one hand and Russian irrationalism on the other,"[62] and his highly intuitive, postmodern polystylism[63] defied facile stylistic categorization despite periodic charges of populism and ephemerality from dismissive critics.

Although there are various studies on Schnittke (including the painstakingly dedicated work of Alexander Ivashkin, Schnittke's biographer and close friend), insufficient attention has been dedicated to his use of monograms.[64] Christopher Segall in particular claims that there is still much to be explored in what Ivashkin defined as "the Schnittke code": "Each of Schnittke's compositions with monograms encodes names of people who had a relationship to the work, such as its dedicatee(s) or first performer(s), and thus enshrines within the pitch material a record of the work's history. Schnittke elevated monograms from an occasional curiosity to a source of pitch material that is deeply connected to the circumstances of his work's creation."[65] Yet with specific regard to the String Trio, one finds little more than an occasional passing reference. I

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[61] Ivashkin, *Alfred Schnittke*, pp. 111-114.
[62] Ibid., p. 166.
[63] "The phenomenon of 'polystylistics' in music existed long before I started to use the word and thought about the interaction of musical material in different styles. The first twentieth-century composers to make use of it were Ives and Mahler. [...]
The fact that I began to use a polystylistic method was brought about, first, by everything these composers had done before me, which I naturally could not ignore. But there was a personal element too. The polystylistic method, the use of interacting styles, gave me a way out of the difficult situation in which I had been put by having to combine, over a long period, work for the cinema with work 'at the desk.'" Schnittke, *A Schnittke Reader*, p. 17.
[64] Note, for example, this summary observation by Valentina Klolopova: "Musical 'painting' did not much interest Schnittke [...] However, musical symbolism was important to the composer: his music is rich in all kinds of musical symbols, such as the enormous number of encoded names to be found in his pieces [...] Another type of musical symbolism is the composer's assimilation of various other styles into his or her own style, while still maintaining a personal voice: Schnittke coined the term 'polystylistics' to cover this technique [...] Collage is a well-known polystylistic device. Thus, allusions to other musics within a polystylistic approach can bring additional meanings into a composition, without having to resort to extra-musical devices such as the use of words, and those meanings can vary from one piece to another.[...] In addition, Schnittke's pieces sometimes utilise musical symbols that imply verbal texts which are not written out in the music but are recalled by the listener." Valentina Klolopova, "Alfred Schnittke's Works," p. 39.
[65] Christopher Segall, "*Klingende Buchstaben*: Principles of Alfred Schnittke's Monogram Technique," *The Journal of Musicology* 30, 2: p. 254.

would argue that, in fact, the opening theme of the first movement contains a monogram of Alban Berg's name (A-B-E*b*-Re-G). Berg himself used musically encoded names as a "secret language" to communicate with a select group of friends. However, "it seems that in Berg's cryptography we deal rather with a mythic communication. From the mythic perspective, a name spelled musically may make its bearer physically or spiritually present and preserved in the musical fabric created by the one who possesses the name. Within the mythological frame of mind, names convey actual energy and authority; names are not only evocative of the essences or persons they represent, they *are* these essences or personas [...] Using abbreviated names of his close friends represented by certain musical pitches, Berg established a system of correspondences between a pitch, a letter, and a personality associated with it. This is similar to the systematic correspondences characteristic of the mythic mind."[66]

I've also found many variations of the famous B-A-C-H pitch set, a monogram Schnittke exploited frequently throughout his compositions as more than a mere motivic tool: after reading studies on the relation of cabbalah to Bach's music, he developed a morbid obsession with the monogram's mystic significance.[67] Ivashkin claims that the symbolism of the B-A-C-H

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[66] Victoria Adamenko, *Neo-Mythologism in Music: From Scriabin and Schoenberg to Schnittke and Crumb* (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2007), p. 129.

[67] "For no apparent reason I once received a present from Luigi Nono — a book about the logic of the cabbala. The author — Jewish, a highly perceptive and intelligent man — simply gave free rein to his imagination, which had cabbalistic features. His imagination seemed to be fatally, finally, and soullessly enclosed. The world of the cabbala reminds me of a psychic illness, which is in essence a continual and critical accumulation of negative experiences. And I am very much afraid of plunging into this world. It is an area that is potentially dangerous.

Are you familiar with the analysis of Bach's duet made by Ulrich Siegele, a German music critic? I read his article sometime in 1979; Alexander Goehr gave it to me. There are four Bach duets written for harpsichord. When Siegele analyzed the second one, he drew attention to the fact that if you express the length of the musical phrases by counting the bars, you get a completely inexplicable sequence of numbers, which constantly changes. This sequence does not fit into any known numerical progression, but its changes are so complicated that they cannot be arbitrary. He struggled to decipher it for a long time until it occurred to him to apply a cabbalistic method. The cabbala makes use of the fact that in ancient Hebrew the letters and numbers are expressed by the same signs. 'A' is one, 'B' is two and so on. Siegele translated this into Latin and found a prayer, the absolutely precise text of a prayer! We know that according to Albert Schweitzer the whole of Bach's intonational structure is predetermined semantically. Many things are concealed in it — the prayers of Golgotha, of Christ raised on the Cross, of his Agony.... But even at this level, it turned out that everything was structured! Having completed this particular analysis, Siegele decided never to use that method again....

There are many occasions when we run the risk of taking a dangerous path. [...] there is no way I want to hold out my hand to the Devil. I am a freethinker, unattached to any church, but I still have a sense of where that boundary is!" Schnittke, *A Schnittke Reader*, p. 32.

monogram in the string trio went beyond the name itself " when heard as a simultaneity, a cluster, and therefore a basic formula of chromaticism. More importantly, as a linear configuration, it describes the sign of the cross."[68] In addition, Paul Westwood astutely observed that "the actual notes B-A-C-H occupy a small compass in the octave, and this makes the motif ideal for atonal material, due to its ability to provide intervals such as the semitone, major seventh and minor ninth."[69] After studying the score thoroughly, I have found that the B-A-C-H variations appear in both melodic and harmonic configurations, often transposed and re-arranged, and a transposition of the monogram ends the first movement with the viola fading away, almost *morendo.* In one instance, the B-A-C-H monogram is combined with A-B-Eb-Re-G (Berg) and Schnittke's own monogram: A-S-C-H-E. Although he only recognizes its presence at the very end of the first movement, Ivashkin interprets Schnittke's use of the B-A-C-H monogram in this trio as a "premonition" of the composer's impending health complications.

Schnittke's fascination with Thomas Mann's *Doktor Faust* began in the late 40s, and the story of Faust became ever more important to him throughout his career. The theme of duality between good and evil is something of a through line in his music. "Schnittke discussed issues and the problem of good and evil with an Orthodox priest [...] and came to understand that after one's life is finished it is not merely the good in an individual that survives. Evil and sin survive as well but they can be transformed into good by future generations. Schnittke believes that this is the irrational way history has developed during recent centuries; its twists and turns cannot be explained merely in terms of positive goals or objections. Very often history acts irrationally, unexpectedly, in a completely inexplicable way. This concept is very obvious in Schnittke's

[68] Ivashkin, *The Schnittke Code*, p. 201.
[69] Paul Westwood, "Schnittke's Violin Sonata No. 2 as an Open Commentary on the Composition of Modern Music," in *Seeking the Soul*, p. 51.

music of the late 1970s and 80s. A struggle between polarities, or irregular pulse, a Faustian multiplicity of meaning: that is the quintessence of his music in this period. A troubled yet precise sensation of the duality of the world runs through the whole of his work."[70] This spiritually-inspired perspective, which is transmitted throughout the structure of the trio, was sustained by his belief, like Alban Berg, that music composition was a "moral endeavor."[71] His conscious, deliberate juxtaposition of simplicity and complexity often rendered him susceptible to accusations of falling into the "banal," but in fact the "banal" was an important element of contrast with the "serious": "All of Schnittke's compositions up to the 1990s contain 'reminders' which pull the listener off the main, logically convincing path. [...] By incorporating these irrational 'reminders' into his music, Schnittke challenges certain rational forces, taking risks with no guarantee of a traditional happy ending."[72]

The first movement, which is set in sonata form, makes immediate reference precisely to the "banal" by presenting a Principal Theme (the aforementioned B-E-R-G monogram) rhythmically inspired by the "Happy Birthday" song set in G minor, which is subjected to periodic, mantra-like repetitions, coloring it with a dissonant interpretation already in m. 2 (see example 1). In the exposition, the violin is the first to deviate into a short fit of chromaticism: this is not surprising, given that the violin represents the devil's instrument in popular culture (see, for instance, Stravinsky's *L'Histoire du soldat*). It leads the others astray in subsequent contrapuntal chromatic episodes, each of which is longer and more important than the previous one. The longest of these climaxes into a five-measure ostinato succession of consonant chords, as if to represent the ultimate battle between "good" and "evil." When this ostinato is reprised in

[70] Ivashkin, *A Schnittke Reader*, p. 154.
[71] As noted by Marija Bergamo in her short Preface to the score (Vienna-London:Universal Edition, 1985).
[72] Ivashkin, *A Schnittke Reader*, p. 158.

the recapitulation, it presents three subsequent (and eliding) transpositions of the B-A-C-H monogram through harmonic succession:

Bm — **Bb**M — **C#**m — **C**M — **Eb**(M+m) — **D**M — **F**m — **E**M — **G**m — **Gb**M

Schnittke serves himself of another technique to musically allude to the cohexistence of "good" and "evil:" by using the "common mediant," he combines major and a minor chords (sharing the same mediant), thus achieving a dissonant yet discernibly "tonal" effect.

This juxtaposition of chords sharing the same mediant will not only become characteristic of the Subordinate Theme (which is also based on a modified transposition of the B-A-C-H monogram), but it will prevail throughout the entire piece, and become most evident in the "chorale" sections (see example 3) which return in cyclical fashion until shortly before the coda of the second movement.

Schnittke exploits the "common mediant" technique in a vertical fashion during the first movement, but he utilizes it in a horizontal fashion as well during the second movement, creating melodic passages that oscillate between major and minor tonalities from the very beginning. Alongside a further development of the thematic elements presented in the first movement, Schnittke introduces two new themes in the second movement: the first is melodically constituted of a combination of broken major and minor chords, and is exchanged between the viola and the violin in canonic fashion. The second of these is an ethereal theme presented by the cello on natural harmonics, accompanied by a disturbing juxtaposition of dissonant held notes with a minor trill that acts like a sinister drone.

The coda of the second movement reprises the very first theme (the "A. Berg" theme) once again in G minor, and this time is entrusted to both the violin and the cello voices. For the first time, the theme is harmonically "undisturbed:" after a short canonic treatment, it develops

into a sequence leading to a fermata on the dominant, in a style that reminds us of Bach's inventions for two voices. Then, the theme is melodically inversed before two final accented chords —displaying the monogram of Alban Berg— "release" the violin from gravity, allowing it to climb the melodic steps toward an infinite oscillation of quarter tones at the higher end of the fingerboard. One may interpret this ending as an allusion of Berg's ascent into heaven.

THIRD DISSERTATION RECITAL

ARIANNA DOTTO, VIOLIN

HYEJIN CHO, PIANO

Wednesday, May 26, 2021
Dame Myra Hess Memorial Concert Series
Chicago Cultural Center – WFMT, 12:15 PM

Sonate für Pianoforte und Violine, Op. 105 (1851) — Robert Schumann (1810-1856)
- Allegro
- Adagio
- Rondeau. Allegro

Three Romances for Violin and Piano, Op. 22 (1853) — Clara Schumann (1819-1896)
- Vivace Molto
- Adagio, Espressivo Molto
- Flott und Lustig

Scherzo from the F.A.E. Sonata for Violin and Piano (1853) — Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Notes summarizing the subjects treated in the lecture

Introduction

Binding elements, common ties among the three works and their composers

- Chronological proximity: the works were all written within the span of three years (1851-1853)
- All three works exploit the lowest registers of the violin's range
- Pivotal presence of Clara Schumann, who premiered all these works
- Joseph Joachim: intimate friend of the Schumanns and Brahms, and dedicatee for the Romances and the Scherzo
- Clara, Robert, and Brahms: critical interrelationships
- The "war of Romantics": Clara, Brahms, and Joachim's role in forming a Conservative Front — in opposition to the different approach to historicism represented by the Radical Progressives of the New German School, led by Franz Liszt and Richard Wagner — with the intent of promoting Robert Schumann's concept of *Werktreue* or "fidelity to the score"; seen as ultimate messengers of the *Kunstreligion*
- Chamber music composition summarily dismissed as an inferior artistic endeavor by the New German School
- *Werktreue* in performance style: the Conservative Front's effort to create a sincere and pure performance without adding a visual dramatic component

Robert Schumann: Sonata for Violin and Piano in A minor, Op. 105

- Background: the Schumann family's escape from the Dresden insurrections of 1849
- Circle of friends in Düsseldorf
- Schumann's brief return to chamber music (1851)
- Schumann's dissatisfaction with the piece at the private premiere

- Comparison between Sonata Op. 105 and *Märchenbilder* Op. 113 for viola and piano
- Exploration of Schumann's themes beginning with an ascending fourth
- The undermining of sonata form in favor of tonal unification (leverage on the A minor – F major dichotomy, a common compositional characteristic)
- Tonal instability
- Simplicity and purity reminiscent of Schumann's *Kinderszenen* in the *Allegretto*
- F major (key of the *Allegretto*) as the key of "happiness"
- Transformation of a childlike four-measure section into a rustic Hungarian-style dance
- Questions regarding bowstroke to be employed in the *Lebhaft*, considering Schumann's sparing use of staccato despite the "unyielding brusque tone" he had sought to achieve

Clara Schumann: Three Romances for violin and piano, Op. 22

- 1853: the Schumanns meet Brahms, and Clara resumes composing after a ten-year pause
- Analysis of Schumann's Op. 105 sonata citation in the first Romance
- Clara's use of F major: a tonality with special meaning for the Schumanns?
- Elements for inspiration from Robert Schumann's *Romanzen* Op. 94
- Sudden mood changes: reference to Robert Schumann's character?
- Clara and Robert's mutual musical citations; their reciprocal professional esteem and promotional support

J. Brahms: Scherzo from the F.A.E. Sonata for violin and piano

- Brahms and Joseph Joachim: background of their relationship
- Pretext for the collaborative creation of the F.A.E. Sonata
- Brahms's use and development of the Dietrich theme, rather than the F.A.E. motto

- Brahms as a master of the scherzo: how the F.A.E. movement contributes to the evolution of the form

- Hemiolas and rhythmic shifting as elements of expressivity

- Beethoven's Fifth Symphony as a source of inspiration

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